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ABSTRACT

The Beacons Initiative aimed to transform eight public schools (five middle schools and three high schools) into youth and family centers in low-income neighborhoods in San Francisco, California. Using a coalition of local partners and funding from public agencies and foundations, the centers served 7,500 youth and adults between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000. The centers provided a broad array of before- and after-school and some evening and weekend activities, including classes in English as a Second Language, sports, art, music, and leadership development. An evaluation of fiscal year 2000 (July-June) was conducted, using enrollment, attendance, activity, and participation data from the centers as well as biannual evaluation visits; surveys in three middle schools on how youth spend their time outside school; records from the San Francisco Unified School District on gender and ethnicity, grade point averages, standardized test scores, and attendance; and project documents. Results were reported in terms of participation, the centers and their programs, organizational innovation and partnerships, and funding and sustainability. The study concludes that the Beacons Initiative has made considerable progress toward creating youth development centers that attract the funding and community support needed to help them thrive. The evaluation suggested that the Beacon Centers model serve as an example to other cities in how to create broad-based support for youth development activities in low-income areas. Five of the Beacon Centers are profiled in an appendix to the evaluation report. (Contains 47 references.) (KC)

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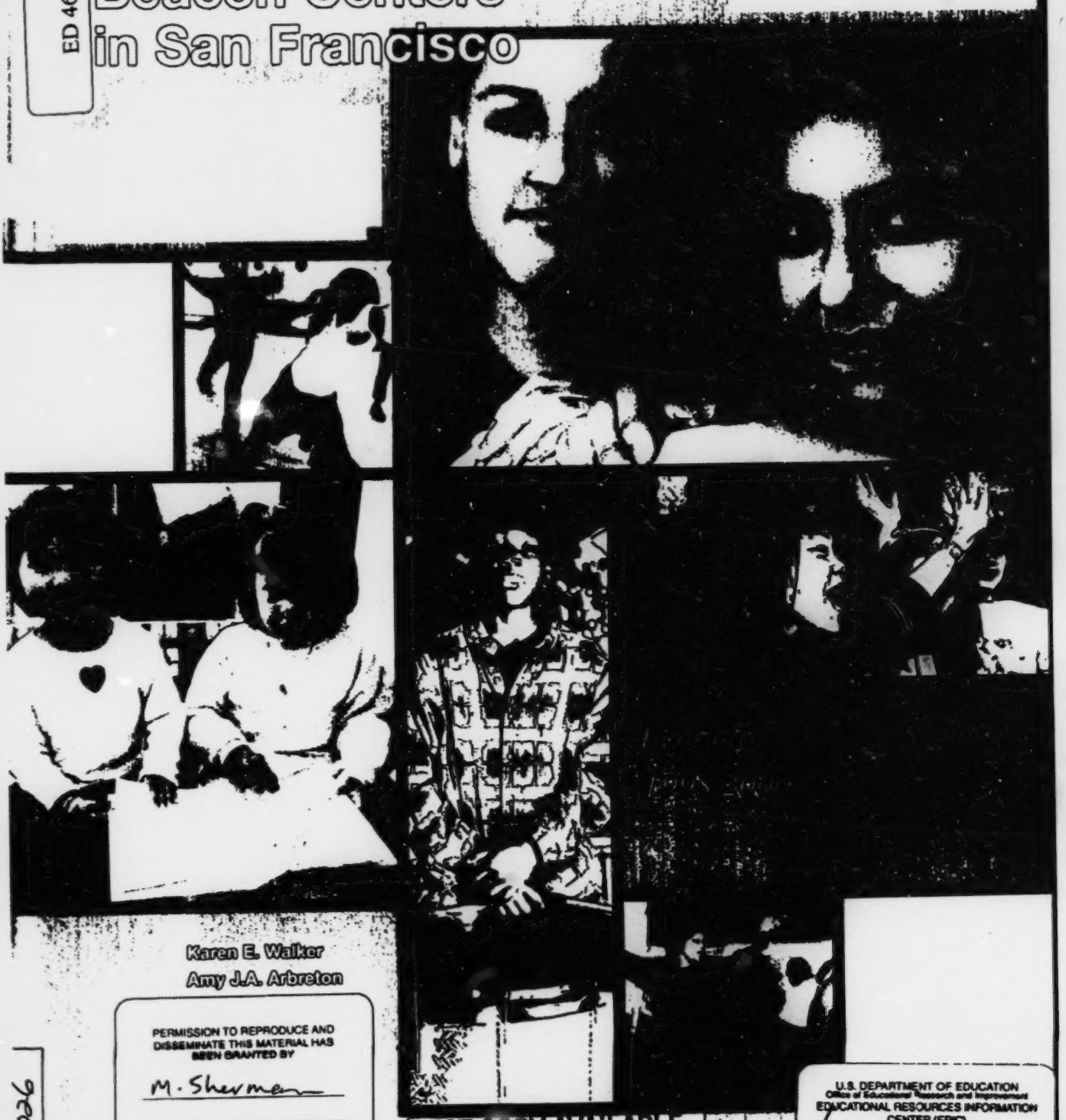

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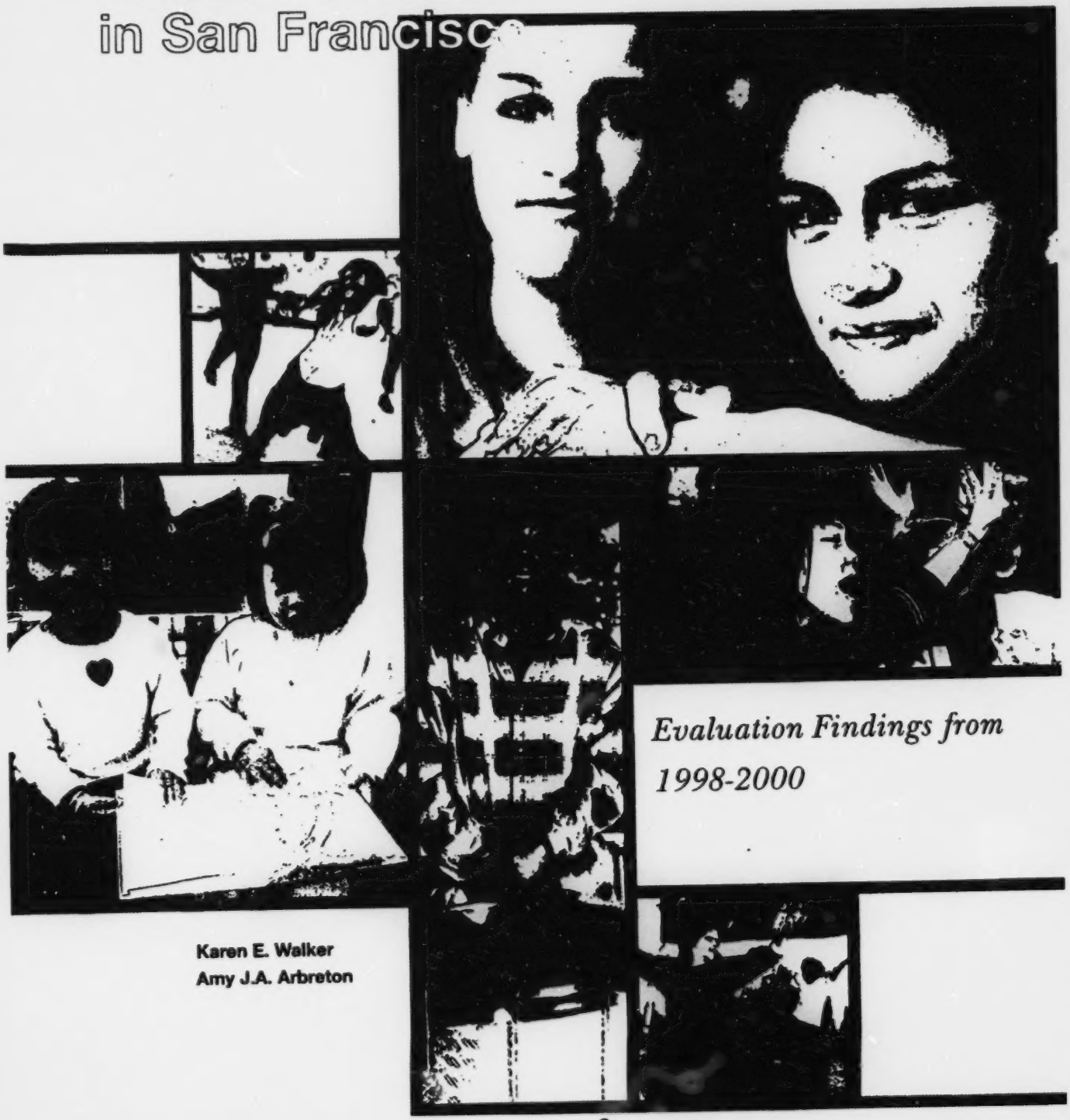

Evaluation Findings from 1998-2000

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Several other people in San Francisco provided invaluable assistance: Kathy Armstrong coordinated research efforts with the sites toward the beginning of data collection. She also facilitated meetings of the researchers and National Advisory Group. Mark Min, who developed the management information system for the Beacon Centers, provided participation data. Donna Trousdale from the San Francisco Unified School District provided school records data. Jennifer Barros from Community Network for Youth Development ensured that we received progress reports from the sites on a regular basis. Janine Sullivan skillfully managed the middle survey data collection process and oversaw the observation data collection.

The National Advisory Group for the initiative—Jim Connell, Michelle Gambone and Michele Cahill—provided helpful feedback on the research design, instruments and plans for analysis. We would especially like to acknowledge Jim Connell for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report.

Ultimately, the research would not have been possible without the cooperation of youth, staff, parents, school principals, teachers and other members of the San Francisco community. We wish to thank them all for talking with us about their families, communities, institutions and experiences with the San Francisco Beacons Initiative.

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Executive Summary

What's it like having a Beacon in your community? Fun...Cool...

They help you do your homework...You get to participate in science, drama and all these other activities.

—Youth Participant

Introduction

In 1994, a broad-based group of San Francisco leaders set out to transform public schools in low-income neighborhoods into youth and family centers that would become a beacon of activity uniting the community. Five centers of the San Francisco Beacons Initiative opened in 1996; three others were added in 1999. Together they served 7,500 youth and adults between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000.

By many measures, the Beacons Initiative has enjoyed an extraordinary start. The centers—through programs before and after school, on weekends and during the summer—offer a broad range of challenging and enriching youth development opportunities in education, career development, arts and recreation, leadership, and health. Neighborhood adults benefit from English and computer lessons, community events, and parent support groups.

While carrying out a common mission, each center is responsive to the local needs and conditions of its specific neighborhood and host school. The ethnic makeup of the communities, organizational resources available within the neighborhoods, and specific needs of the youth and adults in the community shape the centers' operations and offerings.

Much of the centers' success rests in a partnership of parents, social service agencies, city departments, community business leaders, the school district, foundations and community organizations, and divergent groups that have set aside their differences to make the centers vibrant. Success can also be traced to a complex organizational structure designed to ensure the quality of programming throughout the initiative and to help guarantee funding.

The day-to-day operations of each center are overseen by a community-based organization, while a citywide steering committee of public and private funders sets policies and expectations for center operations, provides funds and advocates for changes in institutional practices that ease center operations. A third body, a local intermediary, Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD), helps identify key challenges and brings them to the attention of the steering committee. CNYD also provides technical assistance—in both organizational development and youth development techniques—to all of the centers. Funding is provided through a public-private partnership that brings an array of resources from the local, state and federal governments, as well as local and national foundations.

The following summary, based on an interim report of research conducted on the first five Beacon Centers between Fall 1998 and Summer 2000, highlights the initiative's progress toward fulfilling its mission. The summary identifies key accomplishments as well as the inevitable challenges that have emerged during this complex and ambitious effort.

The Evaluation

In Fall 1998, Public/Private Ventures began documenting the progress of the San Francisco Beacons Initiative in developing an administrative structure and establishing the school-based centers necessary to achieve the initiative's long-term goal—improving the lives of the city's youth. The evaluation used multiple sources of information:

Enrollment, attendance, activity and participation data from the centers, along with biannual visits to evaluate the centers' operations, relationship with the host schools and local concerns;

Surveys in three middle schools on how youth spend their time outside of school, the activities available, and their experiences;

Records from the San Francisco Unified School District on gender and ethnicity, grade point averages, standardized test scores, suspension and attendance; and

Documents provided by the initiative, including training materials, outreach materials, progress reports and budgets.

The evaluation focuses on the first five Beacon Centers. Three operate in middle schools, one in a high school and one in an elementary school. In Spring 1999, three more centers opened in middle schools.

Participation

Each Beacon Center hoped to attract 500 to 1,000 youth and adults annually, whose ethnic diversity would mirror the community's population. The centers have met these goals.

Accomplishments

Overall participation	From July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000, the five centers in the study each served 640 to 1,640 participants: 3,746 youth and 1,435 adults in total.
Participant diversity	The proportion of Latino and white youth at the centers reflected the racial makeup of the host schools. Fewer Asians and far more African Americans used the centers than the schools' racial breakdown would have indicated. The greater proportion of African-American youth may reflect the school district's emphasis on reaching this particular population.
Age range of youth served	The planners selected middle schools as hosts for five of the eight Beacon Centers, assuming that centers in middle schools would draw youth of all ages—parents of young children would feel comfortable sending their children and high-school students would prefer a middle school over an elementary school. The research bore out that assumption. In the three middle schools studied, approximately half of the participants were middle-school youth, and the rest were evenly split between elementary- and high-school students. In the high school, approximately 80 percent of the youth participants were enrolled in high school, and in the elementary school, approximately 70 percent of the participants were enrolled in elementary school.

Gender of youth participants	Although recent studies have shown that girls' participation is often less than boys', the centers served approximately equal numbers of girls and boys—possibly because they included arts, educational and cultural programming in addition to sports.
Recruiting academically at-risk youth	Despite questions concerning voluntary school-based programs' ability to attract at-risk youth, the Beacon Centers at the three middle schools recruited proportionately more students at risk of academic failure than attend the host schools.
Adult participation	In fiscal year 2000, the centers served 150 to 764 adults, about 25 percent of each center's total participation. The most popular adult activities were English as a Second Language, dance and computer courses.

Challenges

Frequency of attendance	In October 1999, 51 percent to 79 percent of the youth at the centers attended activities once a week or less; studies indicate that the more frequently students attend programs the more benefits they receive. Since then, the centers have added programs that meet more frequently, and future research will examine whether youth come more often.
Attendance across activities	Most of the youth (60 percent to 84 percent) who attended the centers participated in only one activity over a four-month period; studies indicate that students who participate in several activities benefit more than those who concentrate on one. Future research will examine whether youth participate in several activities throughout the course of the year.

The Centers and Their Programs

> *I decided to join because I thought it was something interesting, something you never tried before, it catches your attention. We've gone on three trips. The last one was this place, Amoeba Records, and we got to DJ and put music on and all the girls and guys were putting their music on, and we had all kinds of music.*
>
> *—Youth Participant*

Early on, those involved in planning and opening the centers wanted them to be visible, safe, accessible, and welcoming to all. They also wanted the youth programs to focus on five areas: leadership, career development, arts and recreation, health, and education. Overall, the initiative has met many of its goals to create welcoming environments that provide an array of developmental opportunities.

Accomplishments

Staff diversity	The centers hired staff members who reflected the neighborhoods' diversity and advertised the programs in multiple languages, including Chinese, Russian, Tagalog and Spanish.
Program choice and variety	In Fall 1999, the centers provided 14 to 24 activities for youth. About 75 percent of the middle-school participants surveyed thought the centers' programming offered them variety and choice.
Programs during the out-of-school hours	All five centers provided activities in the hours immediately after school, during some evenings and in the summer. Several centers also offered Saturday programs.
Opportunities for educational enrichment	The centers provided a broad range of educational enrichment activities, from homework help for individuals to book clubs and structured tutoring and reading programs.
Leadership opportunities	Youth at the centers reported significantly greater opportunities to assume leadership roles than did non-participant youth.
Out-of-school time in productive leisure activities	Middle-school participants reported spending approximately two and a half hours more per week in productive leisure activities—art, music, dance, drama and tutoring—than youth who attended the schools but not the centers.
Safety	The overwhelming majority (87%) of participating middle-school youth considered the centers safe. Four centers hired adults for safety teams.

Challenges

Transportation	The centers did not provide transportation, and about a quarter of the youth experienced difficulties in getting home after programs ended. In at least one school, where 40 percent of the youth are bused, a lunchtime activity is offered to counter the transportation problems.
Lighting	Elementary and middle schools are designed for use during the day, rendering the centers' lighting inadequate for evening activities. Centers have attempted to use portable lights or to persuade the schools to improve lighting, but these efforts have had limited success. The question of funding for additional lighting has emerged as a serious issue.
Adult support	Although 66 percent of Beacon participants at two schools found adult support at the centers, more than half of the students at a third school said they had no support. The figures fell short of reports from other youth development institutions and showed little improvement over students who attended the schools but not the centers.

Organizational Innovation and Partnerships

The San Francisco Beacons Initiative drew together community-based organizations, city agencies, schools and others to provide an array of developmental activities for youth and their families. These partnerships required cooperation and compromise to bridge differences in missions and practices, but the benefits were great: The partnerships enhanced the range of activities and resources available and streamlined administrative duties, allowing the centers to serve more youth with more activities.

Accomplishments

Number and range of partner organizations	Each center worked with 7 to 14 partners. The proportion of youth served by the partners varied widely: At one center, partners served 17 percent of the youth; at another, 90 percent.
Partners' contributions	Staff from partnering organizations provided activities in all five core areas, and volunteers and AmeriCorps members helped increase the centers' abilities to provide services. In addition, some organizations provided services such as health care for all youth and transportation for youth with special needs.
Coordination across multiple organizations	Staff who coordinated activities at the Beacon Centers used a variety of strategies to ensure communication among the partners, such as weekly or bimonthly meetings.
Shared proposal writing and grantmaking	Public and private funders with a wide range of requirements adopted unified guidelines for funding proposals, and core monies were pooled and distributed through joint decisions.
Shared reports	Public and private funders adopted unified guidelines for progress reports, greatly reducing paperwork at the centers.
Shared action plan	Stakeholders in the initiative, ranging from the community-based organizations that lead each Beacon Center to the public and private funders, made an early commitment to identify the initiative's common mission, goals and outcomes. These elements were structured into an action plan, called a theory of change, that identified both the specific strategies and the partners who would be responsible for carrying them out. The theory of change has been used throughout the initiative to guide its action and management.

Challenges

Ensuring program quality across providers	Establishing standards to ensure high-quality programs was very difficult; enforcing standards across multiple organizations with different cultures and experience levels added to the challenge.
In some neighborhoods youth-serving organizations are rare	The availability of suitable partners depended largely on the range and number of organizations within the neighborhood. To offset the dearth of services evident in two of these communities, center staff called on agencies in other areas of the city and on community residents, who acted as independent contractors, to provide activities for youth.
Partnerships with the schools	The initiative's long-term vision included increasing Beacon-school integration, but a consensus on what this means had not been reached. At all centers, Beacon and school staff discussed space issues. At three centers, the cooperation went much further, with center and school staff discussing specific students and programs.
Formal agreements with the schools	Development of a standard agreement about the use and maintenance of school space had proven elusive.

Funding and Sustainability

Early in the initiative, leaders recognized the need to devise strategies to ensure long-term funding and forged a public-private funding partnership. Relying on public and private sources affords programming flexibility and initiative stability. Both public and private partners have reported that the presence of multiple funders has played an important consideration in their decisions to commit resources to the initiative.

Accomplishments

Core operating funds from public sources	In 1991, San Francisco passed legislation earmarking 2.5 cents per $100 of assessed real property value for children and youth services. A portion of those funds provided 85 percent of the centers' core operating budget of $350,000 per year. In Fall 2000, new legislation increased the set-aside to three cents and extended the program for 15 years. Initiative leaders helped garner public support for the legislation.
Support from private foundations	Private foundations, both local and national, have provided funds for the Beacon Centers since the beginning of the initiative. Seventeen foundations provided capacity-building grants to centers, provided 15 percent of their core operating budgets, and financed the intermediary, public support campaign and evaluation. Most of the local foundations that contributed to the initiative put their resources into a pool, giving the steering committee flexibility in deciding how to spend the funds.

Additional programming funds leveraged

In fiscal year 2000, each center received an additional $178,500 to $770,000 from a variety of sources—including the Juvenile Probation Department and the school district, both of which received state and federal funds for after-school activities. Local agencies provided in-kind resources by operating activities at the centers and providing space.

Public support campaign

A public support campaign, managed by the intermediary, CNYD, succeeded in garnering support from local appointed and elected officials, who attended events at the centers and voiced their support.

Challenges

Increasing the diversity of public funds

Most of the public funds for the centers' core operations come from a single source, the Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF). Other significant public funds had restrictions which made them suitable for program expansion but not core support. Current efforts to diversify the public funds available for core support include bringing other city institutions into the initiative and calling for additional state legislation for youth services.

Organizational Features of the Initiative

A complex organizational structure allows the eight centers to address the concerns of their local communities while sharing a common mission.

The Lead Agencies. Each Beacon Center has a unique lead agency that provides day-to-day oversight and fiscal management. Lead agencies vary in size, capacity and relationship to the community, but in general they enjoy well-established reputations in the centers' neighborhoods.

The Beacon Steering Committee. The Beacon Steering Committee was developed to oversee the initiative. Its four members represent the major funders: the Department of Children, Youth and their Families, the Juvenile Probation Department, local private foundations (represented by the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund), and the school district. The group meets monthly to set policies and expectations for center operations and for the initiative as a whole. The committee also provides core funding, raises additional money for all the centers and serves as an advocate with citywide institutions.

The Intermediary. CNYD provides training in youth development theories and effective programming practices for Beacon Center staff. It also keeps the lines of communication open among all of the partners, highlights issues that need attention and helps centers with technical needs. CNYD also brings potential funders and activity providers to the centers, and manages a public support campaign to introduce elected officials and community members to the programs. Through CNYD, all center directors meet monthly to share information about the institutions and people who provide high-quality activities at their centers.

Sustainability Committee. Established two years after the first Beacon Centers appeared, the Sustainability Committee identifies emerging issues and brings all major initiative leaders (lead agency executives, Beacon directors, CNYD staff, DCYF staff and Haas Jr. Fund staff) together to share information, work toward common goals and solve problems.

Conclusion

The Beacons Initiative has made considerable progress toward creating youth development centers that attract the funding and community support needed to help them thrive. The centers have met most of the early implementation goals; many of the intermediate goals, which focus on stabilizing the initiative and ensuring programmatic diversity and breadth, have also been achieved. The initiative leaders have devised strategies to accomplish the remaining intermediate goals, such as ensuring quality across a myriad of programs. When the initiative has encountered challenges, leaders at all levels have mobilized to identify the source of the challenges, formulate solutions and identify those who can help solve the problems. Overall, how the initiative designed, implemented and provided ongoing support to the Beacon Centers provides important information for cities across the United States that are trying to implement similar strategies.

Future reports will examine whether the Beacon Centers make a measurable difference in young people's lives. A report to be published by Public/Private Ventures will focus on linking youth's developmental progress to their participation in the Beacon Centers. Another report, to be published by Stanford researchers led by Milbrey McLaughlin, will focus on understanding how youth experience the Beacon Centers and how participation fits into their lives.

Introduction

In 1996, Beacon Centers opened in two middle schools in San Francisco. By Spring 1999, eight Beacon Centers were operating in schools across the city. The centers, inspired by the New York City Beacons model, are designed to be neighborhood gathering places that provide a rich array of developmental opportunities for community youth in the non-school hours, as well as activities for adults. The centers aim to fill a social gap in urban communities that lack places to come together for enriching activities. Although some Beacon Centers provide traditional social services, their goals are much broader. As community centers, they are designed to be responsive to the local needs and conditions of specific neighborhoods. The communities' ethnic makeup, organizational resources and specific youth and adult needs shape the centers' operations and offerings. Each center, therefore, has a unique personality and feel.

At the same time, the centers are linked by a common mission. As centers of youth development, they are expected to provide a broad range of challenging and enriching opportunities in five core areas: education, career development, arts and recreation, leadership and health. Youth in low-income communities often have little access to challenging opportunities outside the academic opportunities provided by their schools. Yet without challenging developmental opportunities, their life chances may be limited. Although they may stay out of trouble and complete school—both important and necessary outcomes—they may fail to thrive. Psychologists and other students of human development have suggested that the kinds of opportunities provided by youth organizations, such as the YMCA, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Beacon Centers, may enhance youth's initiative, decision-making skills and social integration (Larson, 2000; Gambone and Arbreton, 1997).

The San Francisco Beacons Initiative (SFBI) aims first to improve the lives of youth and their families in low-income communities. Through participation in Beacons activities, the initiative hopes that youth will develop important competencies that will help them become responsible adults. To do so, however, the initiative recognizes that the Beacon Centers themselves must become stable neighborhood institutions capable of securing sustainable funding from diverse sources.

A complex organizational structure links the centers together to ensure both their quality and their permanence. The day-to-day operations of each center are overseen by a community-based organization, while a citywide steering committee of funders oversees the entire initiative. The steering committee sets policies and expectations for center operations. It also provides core funding and raises additional money for all the centers. A third body, a local intermediary, serves as the operational manager of the initiative. It helps identify key challenges and brings them to the attention of the steering committee. It also provides technical assistance—in both organizational development and youth development best practices—to all the centers.

The goals the initiative has set for itself are ambitious, and stakeholders have planned a multiple-year course of action. The initiative's "theory of change" specifies the steps that need to occur over time. The theory of change has guided both the initiative and the evaluation on which this report is based. The evaluation was designed to examine the effectiveness of the SFBI in achieving its goals. It has done so in the context of four major research questions that are of interest to those implementing similar community school initiatives. The questions are:

- What organizational structures and staff practices are effective in producing high-quality youth development programs, and how do they do so?

- What types of collaboration and systems changes on the part of institutional partners are effective in supporting the work of the organizations that implement community schools?

- How can technical-assistance providers and their partners build the capacity of organizations to take a developmental approach to youth and families?

- To what extent can youth's developmental experiences at community schools be linked to their developmental outcomes?

In addition to these four questions, a fifth question arises out of this and other initiatives' use of the theory of change process, which attempts to achieve consensus about an initiative's ultimate goals and define the strategies necessary to achieve them:

- Is the theory of change process a useful strategy for initiative evaluation and management?

The evaluation of the SFBI alone cannot provide complete answers to these five broad questions, especially when the program is still maturing. Instead, answers to the questions will come from a group of evaluations, including the one on which this report is based and the evaluations of initiatives that use somewhat different strategies to achieve their goals. This report, based on data collected between Fall 1998 and Summer 2000, examines the SFBI's progress. Through its evaluation, the SFBI hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge needed to answer these broad questions, thereby supporting the ability of new initiatives across the country to plan and implement their efforts more effectively.

Two later reports will assess the initiative over the long term, examining each of the broad evaluation questions further. In particular, those reports will address the extent to which youth's developmental experiences at community schools can be linked to their developmental outcomes—an assessment that is not addressed in the current report. One report will bring in longitudinal analyses of school surveys and school records information gathered on the same youth over a three-year period. The other report, conducted by Milbrey McLaughlin, will examine youth's perspectives through a longitudinal series of in-depth interviews with selected youth.

The Beacon Centers and Their Programs

Before one can define which organizational structures and staff practices are effective in producing high-quality developmental experiences for youth, it is first necessary to describe the programs and their organizational structures. The SFBI made several assumptions about the structures and practices necessary to produce high-quality youth development supports and opportunities, which are reflected in the site's theory of change. This report explicitly asks whether the initiative was able to create the structures and implement the practices that it deemed necessary in the theory of change.

The report also describes the developmental experiences that have been implemented in the centers. Providing safe havens for youth is important, but it is only one of the initiative's goals. How youth spend their time in safe havens is also important and can influence their development. Each center, therefore, provides activities in five core areas: education, career development, arts and recreation, leadership and health.

Creating structures and activities is a crucial first step; examining who goes to the centers and participates in activities is just as important. As community centers, the Beacon Centers have been designed to attract youth from the local community as well as those who attend the host school. They aim to bring in youth and adults of all ages and provide them with developmental experiences. This report, therefore, examines the characteristics of the youth who go to the centers and the developmental experiences that they report having.

Initiative Collaborations and Supports

To create community centers that offer a diverse array of services and activities sensitive to the local communities, the initiative requires strong collaborations. Like many community-school initiatives, therefore, the SFBI has encouraged the development of collaborations among a broad range of stakeholders. The collaboration's partners include those who work in an individual Beacon Center as well as those who work with multiple centers. As they have collaborated, institutional partners have identified areas in which they need to change institutional practices to accommodate the initiative. This report examines those collaborations and their efforts to change local institutions.

Key to the structure and implementation of the SFBI are two bodies. An intermediary provides both management oversight and technical assistance to build the programmatic and organizational capacity of the Beacon Centers. A steering committee oversees all aspects of the initiative's development—from site selection to ensuring sustainable funding sources. Both the intermediary and the steering committee are involved in all aspects of the initiative's work, and we describe their efforts throughout the report.

Research Methods

In Fall 1998, with funding raised by the intermediary, Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD), Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) began an evaluation of the SFBI. The goals of the study were to address the key research questions in the context of the initiative's theory of change. This theory, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter II, articulated what stakeholders and researchers assumed was required to achieve the initiative's ultimate goal of improving the lives of youth and their families. Therefore, data-collection activities for the evaluation were built around ensuring that questions related to desired early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes would be answered. Since the initiative is so large, however, decisions needed to be made about what to evaluate given the available resources. As a result, the evaluation focuses primarily on answering questions related to youth (as opposed to family or community) and the organizational structures and practices needed at all levels of the initiative to achieve the desired outcomes. It also focuses on evaluating the first five Beacon Centers that opened between Fall 1996 and Fall 1998. Three of the five centers operate in middle schools, one is located in a high school, and one is in an elementary school. In Spring 1999, three more centers opened in middle schools, but they are not included in the evaluation.

Given the complexity of the initiative and the broad nature of the research questions, the P/PV evaluation used several methods for gathering information.

The initiative's intermediary has overseen the development of a Web-based *management information system* (MIS) that permits all centers to enter enrollment and attendance data for the youth and adults who attend center activities. Those data provide valuable demographic information on all youth. Using the system, centers also collect information about activities, including their schedules; who administers them (the Beacon Center or a collaborating agency); and the core area each encompasses. Information about individual staff is also entered into the MIS. The MIS data have been used throughout the evaluation to examine enrollment and attendance by individual youth. The data, along with progress reports submitted by the centers, have also been used to examine the range of activities provided by the centers.

Surveys of all youth in the three middle schools that are part of the evaluation were administered to measure how the students spend their out-of-school time and to document their development opportunities. In a future report, those surveys will be used to examine whether the youth who participate in the Beacon Center programs report more developmental opportunities than those who do not attend the centers, in turn, leading to higher levels of well-being. This report, however, does not assess change over time as a result of participation in the programs. Instead, it uses the data from the survey to compare how Beacon Center youth differ from youth who do not attend the centers.

School records have been collected from the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) on gender, ethnicity, grade-point averages, standardized test scores, suspensions and attendance. When integrated with data from the surveys, this information has allowed us to compare the academic performance of the Beacon Center youth with those who do not attend the centers. Again, we emphasize that the comparisons made in this report do not assess

the effectiveness of the Beacon Centers on youth outcomes, such as school grades. Instead, they allow us to see whether the youth who attend the Beacon Centers are different from those who do not.

Periodic *assessments of youth activities* provided at the centers have also been undertaken. Beginning in summer 1999, observers examined activities sponsored by the centers, looking particularly at such key youth development dimensions as adult-youth interactions, peer interactions and opportunities for decision-making that staff members provided.

Twice-yearly visits to each center to interview Beacons staff, activity providers, community members and school staff have allowed an examination of how the Beacon Centers are run. Across the centers, approximately 80 staff members and activity providers have been interviewed. Through these visits, P/PV staff have collected data about the centers' operations, the schools that host them, Beacon-school relationships, and the visions of key stakeholders and how well those visions are being implemented.

During site visits, P/PV staff members also interviewed approximately 35 stakeholders (many of them several times) in institutions that have provided crucial support for the initiative. Stakeholders include public and private funders, steering committee members, intermediary staff, school-district personnel and administrators from city agencies. Some of the people with whom we have spoken provided information about their institutions' reasons for getting involved in the initiative, along with descriptions of their involvement. Others have provided that information but have also acted as key informants in helping us understand local concerns and circumstances.

Reviews of documents provided by the initiative, including training materials, outreach materials, progress reports, budgets and other information supplied by the initiative, have been conducted.

The Structure of The Report

The current report examines the implementation of the SFBI in the context of the initiative's theory of change. Chapter II describes the process that the initiative undertook to articulate its theory of change and lays out the early, intermediate and long-term outcomes the initiative set for itself.

Chapter III describes the early collaborations and institutional changes that were required to get the SFBI off the ground. Chapter IV describes the Beacon Centers' early and ongoing successes and challenges in developing places that are visible, accessible, safe and welcoming. Chapter IV also presents information about the activities in the five core areas and examines where there are gaps in coverage and where the initiative is particularly strong.

Chapters V and VI examine who goes to the centers and the developmental opportunities available to participants. Chapter V looks at who the Beacon Centers are serving, in number and in population. It examines the frequency and type of youth participation to better understand whether Beacon Centers can be expected to achieve their intended long-term outcomes. The chapter also compares youth who go to the centers with youth who do not, using data from the middle-school surveys. Chapter VI examines a key initial goal of the SFBI—that of providing high-quality supports and opportunities for youth. This chapter describes the developmental experiences that youth report receiving from their participation in the Beacon Centers in terms of adult support, safety, leadership opportunities and engaging activities, as well as in terms of their productive use of out-of-school time.

Chapters VII through IX describe different aspects of the collaborations that have been necessary to implement a broad array of activities and to sustain the centers. Chapter VII describes the nature and content of collaborations with organizations and individuals that provide activities at the Beacon Centers. Chapter VIII describes the nature and content of collaborations with the schools, the key institutions that provide the facilities and access to youth, and examines attempts to change institutional practices. Chapter IX describes the collaborations that have been undertaken by funders, the intermediary, the centers and other agencies to sustain the initiative's efforts.

Chapter X examines the SFBI's strategies in relation to four of the five major research questions presented in this introduction. The chapter also reflects upon the initiative's outcomes and what they can teach us about establishing effective, long-term community-school programs.

The Initiative's Theory of Change

Community initiatives such as the SFBI hope not only to change the lives of individuals but also to strengthen the webs of supports available within communities. They require the work and engagement of many people and organizations and are designed to respond to a broad range of local conditions. In short, each community initiative is expected to be implemented in a unique, context-specific way.

In practice, manifold challenges accompany such ambitious undertakings. The multiple community members and organizations crucial to the project's planning inevitably voice different opinions about the community's needs and strengths and how to address the former and capitalize on the latter. Such diverse ideas generate creative thinking and interesting collaborations, but they must be organized so they can also contribute to coherent planning.

People ultimately must agree on how things will be done and who will do them. All good implementation—whether of stand-alone programs or of community initiatives—requires such consensus thinking. Without knowing which person or organization is responsible for a specific action, there is little accountability. Without accountability, making sure that things get done becomes almost impossible. In community initiatives, where the task is complicated by the kind of multiple-group negotiations described above, getting organizations to agree on who will do what and when can be especially arduous.

The task of evaluation—deciding whether and how goals have been met—is also complicated in community initiatives. Random-assignment impact studies to evaluate how individuals have benefited are not possible when one of the goals of the initiative is to affect the lives of everyone in the community. Finding comparison communities is extremely challenging because researchers do not yet know enough about how to measure community-level variables that can affect the implementation of community initiatives.

In the SFBI, planning-group members recognized the multiple challenges and addressed them through the theory of change process. This chapter describes the process the SFBI underwent, the specific theory of change that resulted and the evaluation that was designed around it. It is intended to help the reader understand more completely how the initiative's planners envisioned the project.

Over the course of one year, during 1996 and 1997, stakeholders in the SFBI undertook an extensive theory of change process led by the intermediary, CNYD, and another organization, the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE). A researcher from IRRE who was experienced in the theory of change process and an expert in adolescent development conducted interviews with stakeholders from both the Beacon Centers and the funders. Regular meetings among key stakeholders—funders, intermediary staff and Beacon Center directors—were held to identify key long-term outcomes that the Beacon Centers hoped to achieve through their efforts. Meetings were also held at the centers with staff, community residents, representatives from partner organizations and students involved in the center to discuss the goals of the initiative. The group hoped that the Beacon Centers would be able to improve the lives of youth and their families. The group also aimed to create centers that would become institutions within their neighborhoods and schools so the work would continue into the future.

Once it had identified key long-term outcomes, the group set about constructing a model, or theory, of how the outcomes would be achieved. The group identified the early and intermediate outcomes that

it assumed (on the basis of program experience and research) were necessary to achieve the long-term outcomes. An initial theory of change document was produced that identified common goals and expectations for the initiative. The document was revised after review by internal and external stakeholders to ensure that it was plausible and doable. A series of meetings were then held with Beacon Center directors and others to discuss time lines and how the theory of change would drive the evaluation.

The resulting theory of change integrated practitioners' knowledge about the attributes of good youth programs and what it takes to get a new project off the ground with researchers' knowledge about child and adolescent development. It not only made explicit assumptions about how to improve the lives of youth and their neighborhoods, it also identified the organizational levels at which changes (i.e., outcomes) must occur. As we noted in the introduction, the initiative is administered on three levels: the site level, the intermediary level and the initiative level. Each level plays a specific role and has specific responsibilities for ensuring that certain or designated outcomes are achieved. The levels, however, cannot and do not operate independently of each other. They are tied together by the interconnected nature of the initiative. As the initiative progresses, the ways in which each level relies on the others to achieve its ends has become clearer.

Below, we present the desired outcomes for each level as outlined in the theory of change.

Site Level

The site level consists of the Beacon Centers, their lead agencies, their host schools and their local communities and agencies. It is the initiatives' most visible level; the tasks for which it is responsible include creating the Beacon Centers themselves, staffing them, engaging the community, coordinating programs and ensuring that the programs are of high quality. The Beacon Centers' staff are responsible for coordinating efforts at the site level.

Table 2.1 presents the outcomes that were defined for the site level through the theory of change process.

Table 2.1
Site-Level Outcomes

Early
- Encouragement of community engagement and leadership
- Beacon Centers that are visible, accessible, safe and welcoming to all
- Beacon programs that support long-term outcomes
- Beacon staff that are well trained, diverse and responsive
- Participation of youth and families in a range of activities

Intermediate

For youth:
- Increased productive use of discretionary time
- High-quality developmental supports and opportunities, including supportive relationships, interesting learning experiences, involvement and membership

For adults/families:
- Increased connections with others
- Broader and deeper participation in family activities

For youth and adults/families:
- Growing participation in the Beacon Centers
- Reported benefits of Beacon participation

For communities:
- Reported positive impact
- Involvement in Beacon decision-making
- Leverage of resources into the community

For schools:
- Increased school-Beacon integration
- Increased school-community interaction

Long-Term

For youth:
- Increased competencies in core areas*
- Well-being'
- Success in school'

For adults/families:
- Increased competencies in core areas*
- Increased family supports for education*
- Positive school connections'

For communities:
- Community ownership of the Beacon*
- Increased leveraging of resources*
- Greater community support for youth*

For schools:
- Shared sense of purpose between Beacon and school*
- Broader and deeper school-Beacon integration*
- Broader and deeper school-community collaboration*

* Indicates the long-term outcomes for which the initiative will hold itself accountable (the initiative is accountable for all early and intermediate outcomes at the site level, but only some of the long-term outcomes).

' Indicates outcomes that the initiative realizes are influenced by many factors, of which the Beacon Centers are only a part. The outcomes are therefore considered exploratory, and the initiative's success does not rest on achieving them.

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Intermediary Level

The intermediary level of the initiative is, in some respects, the most complex. The intermediary provides support for both the initiative and the site levels. In general, the intermediary does not have the same degree of formal decision-making authority that the funders and the center staff have. What that means is that even though the intermediary is involved in decision-making (it gathers information from many sources to enable decisions to be made and provides expertise), it is difficult to assign responsibility for particular decisions to the intermediary. In addition, much of the intermediary's work focuses on developing positive partnerships among multiple stakeholders. Although it is relatively easy to document when the intermediary convenes or provides staff support to the many meetings that bring stakeholders together, it is far more difficult to document the almost constant work of relationship building that is fundamental to the intermediary's work. It is even more difficult to determine the extent to which the positive relationships that have been forged can be assigned to the intermediary because those relationships require the active participation of multiple partners. Therefore, determining whether a number of the intermediary outcomes have or have not been met is challenging.

Some areas of the intermediary's work, however, are straightforward in terms of documenting progress. For example, it is relatively easy to track the development of the public-support campaign and the resources that the intermediary provides to the sites regarding youth development best practices.

Table 2.2 presents the outcomes that were defined for the intermediary through the theory of change process.

Table 2.2
Intermediary-Level Outcomes

Early

In support of the site-level outcomes:
- Build positive and cooperative relationships among Beacon site stakeholders
- Strengthen sites' commitment to the theory of change
- Provide needed implementation resources and effective support that build site capacity to establish a Beacon Center
- Build understanding of and commitment to youth development practices by Beacon sites

In support of the initiative-level outcomes:
- Build positive and cooperative relationships among initiative stakeholders
- Support and advocate for systems accommodations to Beacon Centers
- Initiate and manage the development of evaluation strategies
- Facilitate development and effective management of public-support campaigns
- Initiate development of a core funding strategy and cultivation of donors

Intermediate

In support of the site-level outcomes:
- Build teamwork and shared responsibility among Beacon site stakeholders
- Strengthen implementation of youth development best practices that enhance quality in Beacon programs
- Aid sites' meaningful use of the theory of change to guide programming, resource allocation and dissemination

In support of the initiative-level outcomes:
- Facilitate negotiations with service systems
- Manage communication and public-support campaigns
- Manage evaluation resulting in information that is useful, compelling, clear, accessible and meaningful to all stakeholders

Long-term

In support of the site-level outcomes:
- Institutionalize the theory of change process by Beacon sites
- Promote greater diversity and agency use of best practices at Beacon sites

In support of the initiative-level outcomes:
- Facilitate establishment of long-term partnerships between service systems and Beacon Centers
- Support the ongoing use of evaluation findings by Beacon stakeholders and broader dissemination of evaluation findings
- Promote broad-based public support for the Beacons initiative, ensuring commitment of funding

Table 2.3
Initiative-Level Outcomes

Early
- Systems accommodations in support of Beacon sites
- Public support from the mayor, school superintendent and private funders for Beacons Initiative
- Core funds raised through partnership of city, school, district and private funders
- Evaluation designed, funded and launched
- Public-support campaign for Beacon Centers designed, funded and launched

Intermediate
- More diverse and deeper partnership between youth service systems and Beacon Centers
- Systems resources redirected to support Beacons
- Strategy in place for committed long-term funding

Long-term
- Neighborhood institutionalizing of successful Beacon Centers
- Secured, sustainable and diverse funding sources to support core site funding
- Citywide departments and youth development agencies committed to the Beacon Centers as an effective delivery platform.

Initiative Level

The tasks of the third level, the initiative level, center on developing funding streams and working toward the long-term sustainability of the Beacon Centers. At this level, the Beacon steering committee is primarily accountable for ensuring that tasks get done. In addition, however, the sustainability committee—which consists of people from the steering committee, the intermediary and the Beacon Centers—has become involved in some of the work. Table 2.3 presents the outcomes that were defined for the initiative level through the theory of change process.

How the Levels Fit Together

The original theory of change specified not only the paths necessary to move from early to intermediate to long-term outcomes but also the directional paths of responsibility from one level of the initiative to the next. It postulated, for example, that support from the mayor, school superintendent and private funders was required before the Beacon Centers could achieve their early outcomes. These paths, however, did not simply go in one direction, from the initiative and intermediary levels to the site level; they also moved from the site level to the initiative level, indicating that achieving outcomes at the site level is necessary to achieve later outcomes at the initiative level. The theory of change, therefore, postulates that implementing centers in which youth and families participate in a range of activities is a necessary precursor to having systems resources directed to support the Beacon projects. The assumption makes sense: Funders are more likely to allocate their resources to a given program if they have some indication that the program is used.

The Theory of Change and the Evaluation

The SFBI stakeholders not only used the theory of change to set their course at the beginning of the initiative, they have used it throughout the initiative's development to reflect on their progress and plan further implementation strategies. The intermediary, in particular, has taken the lead in using the theory of change as a management tool and in ensuring that people who are new to the initiative understand what the SFBI hopes to accomplish and how it hopes to do so.

The theory of change has also been key in designing evaluation strategies. The overall evaluation was designed to examine the initiative's early, intermediate and long-term outcomes. Each of the chapters that follows addresses the initiative's progress on specific early or intermediate outcomes. It is too soon, however, to address the long-term outcomes, which will be examined in a future report.

Early History

My vision is that every child in San Francisco—no, I would broaden that and say the Bay Area—would have a community place to go where they feel that their talents would be nurtured and where they think someone cares about them, and where they can engage in positive activities with peers.

—An SFBI funder

The story of the San Francisco Beacons Initiative is one of intense collaboration among a large number of public and private funders, community-based organizations, schools and communities. But the undertaking, all agree, began with the excitement that a small group of public and private funders had for the work of the New York City Beacons Initiative.

This chapter describes how the SFBI came to be. In particular, it asks the following questions:

- What was the motivation behind the initiative?
- How did planners gain support from key stakeholders for the initiative?
- How were core funds raised to begin the initiative?
- How were school sites and community-based organizations that would implement the centers selected?

The Initiative's Beginning

Early in the 1990s, philanthropic institutions and youth-serving practitioners began to call for a new focus in the provision of youth services. Their new approach, termed *asset-based* or *youth development* programming does not focus on intervening in the lives of youth who have been labeled "problems" as a result of risky or criminal behavior. Instead, it argues that fewer youth would end up pregnant, addicted, out of school or in the criminal justice system if society were to provide high levels of support and opportunities for all youth, before problems begin (Pittman and Cahill, 1992). Developmental supports and opportunities had been identified by researchers as essential precursors to adolescent and therefore later adult success. For example, research on adolescence has consistently shown that youth who have strongly supportive relationships with adults, both family members and others, engage in fewer risky behaviors and more pro-social activities than those without (Werner and Smith, 1982; Furstenberg et al., 1999; Sipe and Ma, 1998). Research on social programs has demonstrated that youth-serving organizations and programs can effectively nurture positive adult-youth relationships (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Morrow and Styles, 1995).

In truth, youth programming that focuses on developmental supports and opportunities has long been provided by a range of youth-serving organizations. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Girls Incorporated, YMCA, YWCA, Police Athletic League and smaller, community-based organizations have provided recreational and enrichment activities that assume that pro-social activities help shape youth into responsible and productive adults. What was new in the early 1990s was the recognition that existing programs were not meeting the needs of youth, especially in poor urban communities. Further, youth development advocates hoped

to reshape the public discourse about youth, which tended to portray poor urban youth, especially minorities, as problems instead of as potentially valuable members of society.

While practitioners advocated a developmental approach to youth services, interest began to grow in expanding activities for youth in the after-school hours. Crime rates among adolescents had been steadily rising, and a number of studies indicated that crime among youth spiked in this period (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Fox and Newman, 1997). Thus, public funding was becoming available for programs that would provide safe havens for youth after school.

In New York City, the concerns of those interested in enriching the lives of poor urban youth and the concerns of those interested in getting adolescents into safe havens after school merged with a third concern, that of providing neighborhoods with greater access to school facilities. In response to the concerns, the City of New York decided to provide grants to create community centers—Beacon Centers—that would focus on youth in the non-school hours. A key component of the centers would be the existence of a strong technical team that not only would provide a range of assistance to the centers themselves but also would advertise the existence of the centers and their purposes around the country.

On the other side of the country, San Francisco had many of the same concerns. Poor urban neighborhoods lacked facilities for community events, and youth living in those neighborhoods often had limited access to enriching opportunities. In addition, the superintendent and staff from the San Francisco Unified School District were very interested in using schools differently. Although it is difficult to say exactly how the process unfolded, since such ambitious undertakings are often generated by multiple motivations, a key event was a trip that program officers from three foundations took in 1994 to see the New York City Beacon Centers. They spoke with staff from the Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York, the technical-assistance provider for the New York initiative. They also visited one of the New York Beacon Centers. Later, one of the program officers described what she saw:

> *There was so much activity going on: Kids were playing basketball and putting on a show in the auditorium. Other kids were playing four square. Teachers were there after school. I saw some kids doing homework in another area and parents doing a self-help group. One of the parents talked to me about sitting in her apartment and smoking cigarettes—she talked about finding a support group at the Beacon and stopping smoking...It was very protected; young people were being paid to provide safety support. It was very rich; it seemed like there was something going on in every classroom. The principal was there, talking about being there on weekends. The experience was just very pure and encouraging.*

At the time, conditions were conducive for launching a city-based initiative to open youth-based community centers in San Francisco schools as well. In 1991, San Francisco voters passed a proposition to set aside 2.5 cents per $100 of assessed real property value to support programs for San Francisco's youth. The mayor formed the Office of Children, Youth, and Their Families—now the Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF)—to administer the funds. Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, which spearheaded the creation of the fund (now called the Children's Fund), encouraged the City of San Francisco to fund and support the centers. The group's work helped generate public interest in a youth development agenda within the city, which has been key to the broad support that the Beacons Initiative has enjoyed.

The initiative offered important potential benefits to early participants. Program officers from private foundations saw the Beacon Centers not only as an exciting funding opportunity but also as an important opportunity to demonstrate the ability of youth development initiatives to enhance existing social services for children and families. The city, in turn, saw the initiative as a flagship project for delivering youth development opportunities. Key city staff hoped the initiative would eventually provide a model for the delivery of other youth services. For the schools, the initiative provided an opportunity to expand existing community-based services.

In Fall 1994, full of enthusiasm for the possibilities in San Francisco, staff from the SFUSD, DCYF, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund formed a small working group. One of its members reported:

> *We had a very strong interest in seeing that this happened in a way that would have long-term sustainability, and we wanted to ensure quality. We wanted to give the local sites a lot of leeway in what the components might be, but the whole notion of developing youth leadership, adults and kids working together, was key. Also, this would be a public/private enterprise.*

For the next two years, the group met every two weeks to plan the initiative. Several tasks needed to be done before it was implemented. First, the working group had to identify an organization to provide staff support and expertise for the planning and, perhaps, for the implementation process. As a result, in 1995, Community Network for Youth Development, a newly formed, community-based organization that had been working to improve the training of youth-services providers, was brought on board to act as an intermediary for the initiative. In keeping with the vision of a high-quality, sustainable initiative, the intermediary's role was to manage the initiative and provide technical assistance to the future Beacon Centers.

Identifying Core Funds

A second major planning task was to identify core operating funds for the Beacon Centers. The planning group aimed to create a public-private partnership: Core operational support would come primarily from public funds. Private funds, which are often less restricted than government funds, would provide crucial flexibility to the initiative's budget. Start-up costs, special projects and equipment, the evaluation and the intermediary were all seen as potential recipients of private funds. Several foundations made early commitments for funding, and the planners then looked to identify public funding. The first attempt to garner public funds, however, fell through when hoped-for federal funding did not materialize, and the first two centers were unable to open in Fall 1995, as originally anticipated.

Nonetheless, the highly committed planning group continued to work on the problem. First, with the intermediary's support, the steering committee created a process that identified the centers' budgetary needs for planning, start-up and core operational support. Each center's planning costs were expected to be $50,000, while start-up and ongoing operations were expected to cost $350,000 a year for each center. Public funds for start-up and future core support were identified in Spring 1996. San Francisco's mayor expressed a strong commitment to youth services, and the DCYF committed $864,000 for four centers in fiscal year 1997; two of those centers opened in Fall 1996. Because the planning group saw the development of broad-based public support as a crucial step in sustaining the Beacons initiative, it hoped to open several more centers across the city. The city's initial contribution, therefore, was seen as a small portion of what it would ultimately contribute. In fact, the city eventually raised its funding levels to support eight centers. It also raised its per-center contribution for operational support, originally set at $250,000, to $300,000. The DCYF's current annual contribution to the initiative is $2.4 million.

The city's substantial monetary contribution was possible only because unrestricted public funds for children and youth services were available. From the beginning, the DCYF's contribution to the Beacon initiative made up a substantial portion of the department's overall budget, and the decision to fund the initiative was made because staff saw it as a potential way to provide youth development activities and services in a more comprehensive setting.

Throughout the initiative, private funders have also contributed significant amounts of money. Local foundations currently supply $50,000 of each Beacon Center's core budget, which is down from $100,000 per center during start-up. They have also contributed another $200,000 for capacity building at the sites. Through separate grants, private foundations have also contributed approximately $1.6 million annually to support the Beacon steering committee, the intermediary and the evaluation. Including private and public funds, the current total annual cost of the undertaking (excluding leveraged and in-kind resources from other sources) is approximately $4 million.

Early Site Selection

A third planning task was the selection of school sites, a crucial undertaking in a broad-based, long-term initiative. To create a sustainable initiative, early centers needed to effectively deliver services and be visible to the San Francisco community. In addition, they had to be located in communities of need. Thus, a number of criteria were developed to select the first five sites. As in most initiatives, however, selection criteria were in the end somewhat flexible, and the sites were chosen for a variety of reasons.

The following criteria were used to choose a Beacon Center site:

- They had to be communities in federal enterprise/empowerment zones. The planning committee believed that future funding might be available in those communities, and, by definition, they were communities with high rates of poverty and need.

- They had to be neighborhoods where many youth live. While San Francisco has a number of low-income communities, the absolute numbers of children and adolescents varies across the communities. The initiative wanted to ensure that large numbers of youth would have access to the centers.

- Appropriate school facilities had to be available. In most cases, the planning group wanted to locate the Beacon Centers in middle schools for two reasons. First, group members thought that it would be easier to draw older youth to middle schools than to elementary schools. Second, middle schools have larger and more appropriate facilities. The size of desks, chairs and toilets in elementary schools can present challenges to programming for older youth.

- Support from the school district was a must. School district staff were members of the planning group and identified schools and communities in which the school district wanted to provide more services.

- Support from principals and other school staff was necessary.

- Support from the community and its agencies was also necessary.

- A lead agency that could be a strong partner in implementing a Beacon Center had to be identified.

Although all sites met some of the criteria, none of the sites met all. Table 3.1 describes the extent to which each site fit the criteria. Three criteria—support from the school district, the school and the community—were crucial. A Beacon Center could not be located in a school that did not show at least formal support. In practice, school support ranged from formal agreements on the part of school staff to very strong and proactive lobbying by school staff for a center. Likewise, if the community did not support the idea of a school-based Beacon Center, the community was not selected to host one. For example, two communities were approached early on in the initiative, but discussions with them failed. One community had already developed strong plans for its own community-school, and there was no support for a Beacon Center. In the other community, a major youth-serving organization wanted to open a Beacon Center in its own facility—not in the school—and negotiations for the center stalled. Strong support in any of the three crucial areas influenced the decision to place a Beacon Center in a particular school or neighborhood. The school district, for example, supported all sites, but its support was especially strong in Summit and Valley. In Summit, the middle school had recently been reconstituted; after some years of poor academic performance among the student population, the entire staff was reassigned to other schools in the district and an entirely new staff was brought in. The school district hoped that a Beacon Center would strengthen the school's attractiveness to the local community. In other neighborhoods, the interest of the local community drove site selection. Meadow, Eastern and Ocean all had strong community groups that lobbied hard for the Beacon Center. Local agency staff and residents argued that their communities lacked services: Meadow and Ocean are largely residential neighborhoods that have undergone recent demographic transformations, with more poor residents moving into them. Eastern, while rich in community resources, had few services for school-aged children and adolescents and hoped that a Beacon Center would enhance its ability to offer such services.

Table 3.1
Presence of Key Selection Criteria in Communities Hosting the Five Beacon Centers Involved in the Evaluation

Selection Criteria	Valley*	Eastern	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Empowerment Zone	✔				✔
Large number of low-income youth in community	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Appropriate school facilities	✔		✔	✔	✔
Strong school district support	✔				✔
Strong school support		✔			✔
Community support	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Lead agency identified	✔		✔	✔	

* Both the Beacon Centers and their host schools have been given pseudonyms in this report. The names of all but one of the Beacon Centers are actually different from the names of the schools that host them. This report, however, uses the same name for the Beacon Center and its host school.

The two criteria that the planning group was willing to overlook were the presence of an empowerment zone and the identification of a strong lead agency. While it was obvious in Valley that the lead agency would be an organization that had long been involved with the middle school, it was less obvious in Eastern and Summit who the lead agency would be. In Eastern, a collaboration of agencies that was lobbying for the Beacon Center originally thought it could run the center as a group—a notion rejected by the steering committee. Choosing the lead agency took some negotiating among collaborative members. Summit faced a different barrier. The community is poor in resources, and identifying an agency willing to take on a Beacon Center was a challenge.

Two sites that had strong community support—Ocean and Meadow—came up with creative ways to partner with a lead agency. Each site had identified a small agency with a strong interest in running the program but without the fiscal capacity to do so. In both communities, the small agencies partnered with much larger agencies that could provide fiscal support. However, the ultimate outcome of the arrangements differed. In Ocean, the small agency partnered with a much larger agency that provided fiscal support while the small agency developed its capacity. Partly as a result of technical assistance received from the intermediary, the small agency was able to take over completely as the lead agency in July 2000. In contrast, in Meadow, the large, fiscal agency soon became very interested in the Beacon Center and ultimately became the lead agency. The executive director of the small agency joined the lead agency as the Beacon director. Again, the intermediary provided technical assistance, this time in the form of mediation, to help the site make the transition.

A final criterion did not concern conditions in the neighborhoods themselves but did concern the distribution of centers across the city. The city, which was providing substantial funding to the initiative, had certain goals. While serving low-income youth is part of its mission, it is also important that the city fund programs citywide. Therefore, centers needed to be located across San Francisco rather than concentrated in a particular area of the city. When the initiative later added three more centers to the original five, each was located in a separate neighborhood.

The Host Schools

Site selection for the Beacon Centers resulted in eight Beacon Centers in diverse communities across the city. As we noted in Chapter I, this report focuses on the five centers that began operations prior to 1999. Each of the host schools for those five centers serves a highly diverse and low-income population of children and adolescents (see Table 3.2). Three of the host schools are middle schools, one is an elementary school and one is a high school. In this section, we briefly summarize the schools' physical characteristics and their student population.

Space

The schools' physical facilities play a substantial role in the look, feel and programming in each of the Beacon Centers. The schools vary in size, location and type. The middle schools and high schools are large and are located in sections of the city that have open space around them.

The elementary school, Eastern Elementary, is compact and is tucked into a densely populated urban neighborhood. The elementary school primarily has classroom space available to the Beacon Center, although a multipurpose room is also available, and only the fourth- through sixth-grade rooms hold full-sized desks and chairs. In contrast, each middle school and high school has a gymnasium, auditorium, lunchroom and athletic fields available in addition to classroom space.

It is not just the presence or absence of particular facilities that affects programming and activities. School enrollment compared with the school's physical capacity also affects how Beacon Centers operate. In some schools, such as Meadow Middle School, the student enrollment has reached, if not exceeded, the building's capacity to house students. The Meadow Beacon Center has a small closet that it uses for some administrative tasks, but it has no other dedicated space and must share all space with school-day staff. Therefore, the center cannot set up permanent arrangements of furniture for its own uses. As we suggest in the following chapter, this affects how youth in the center perceive the supports available at the program. In addition, it has also led the staff at the Meadow Beacon Center to develop space beyond the school grounds into "satellite" spots for administration and programs.

In other schools, however, student enrollment is not at capacity. In Summit Middle School, an entire floor is currently unused by school-day staff. The Summit Beacon Center, along with associated after-school programs, therefore, has access to dedicated space for programming. Three of the five Beacon Centers have space dedicated to their programs.

The Student Population

Information about the students in the schools supplied by the SFUSD from the 1998-1999 school year for the five Beacon host schools is summarized in Table 3.2. As the table indicates, the student populations in the host schools are all ethnically diverse, but the patterns differ significantly across the schools. Four of the five schools have large Asian populations (primarily Chinese, but also Japanese, Filipino, Korean and Pacific Islander) that constitute approximately half the student body but differ with respect to the other ethnic groups that make up the schools. In Eastern Elementary, for example, Asians and Latinos together make up over 90 percent of the student population. Ocean High School, on the other hand, has a very small Latino population. The proportion of students with limited English proficiency also varies across the school sites, ranging from a high of 75 percent of students in Eastern Elementary School to a low of 16 percent in Meadow Middle School.

Structure of the Initiative

By 1996, a three-fold organizational structure was developed for the initiative as a result of both organizational and funding decisions and the initiative's articulation of its theory of change. From the point of view of the stakeholders, the initiative's future sustainability and success required the active participation of staff from major partners who had the authority to make policy decisions and who could exert influence within their institutions. The Beacon steering committee became the group charged with policy-making and setting the direction of the initiative. The committee also devotes time to fundraising. Originally, the committee was composed of staff from the DCYF, the SFUSD, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund (which represents a collaboration of private funders). The current school-district representative to the Beacon steering committee is the associate superintendent for student support services, who oversees programs such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Healthy Start and the After School Learning Centers. The steering committee has since expanded slightly to include the city's Juvenile Probation Department (see Chapter IX), but its overall function remains the same.

The second structure key to the initiative is the intermediary, whose support, the SFBI's planning group noted, had greatly benefited the New York City Beacon Centers. The intermediary's role is complex and includes the provision of technical assistance in multiple areas, staff support for the steering committee and management of the public-support campaign.

Table 3.2
Ethnic Characteristics and Percentage Receiving Free and Reduced-Price Lunch of Host School Students during 1998-1999 School Year

Characteristics	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
School level	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle	Middle
Number of students	360	551	2,367	1,260	526
Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	87%	63%	25%	42%	58%
Student ethnicity*					
African-American	4%	21%	8%	10%	27%
Asian	53%	18%	54%	48%	45%
Latino	37%	44%	4%	8%	13%
Other white	3%	6%	19%	22%	2%
Other non-white	4%	13%	15%	14%	13%
Limited English proficiency	75%	44%	20%	16%	32%

* Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: San Francisco Unified School District School Database.

The third key structure is the Beacon Centers themselves. Each Beacon Center is administered by a lead agency, which is responsible for both fiscal management and coordinating Beacon Center programs and staff. Center staff and their lead agencies are responsible for determining the actual content and schedule of the Beacon programs. The tasks for which center staff are responsible include scheduling and overseeing activities at the centers, identifying and contracting with individuals or agencies that provide services and activities, fundraising for additional resources and budget management.

These three structures—the steering committee, the intermediary, and the centers themselves—are woven together in a complex web of roles and responsibilities. Many of the chapters that follow describe how each structure has contributed to building and sustaining the initiative.

The Beacon Centers: Their Communities and Early Achievements

The previous chapters described the vision for the Beacon Centers—school-based centers that provide a rich range of activities that contribute to the development of children, adolescents and their families—and the early steps taken at the initiative and intermediary levels to implement them. This chapter begins to look at the Beacon Centers on the ground. In particular, it examines the centers' progress in achieving the early outcomes that the initiative specified as necessary to promote long-term success.

Although each Beacon Center is located in a particular school and is expected to shape its programs and activities to reflect the needs of its school and community, the Beacon Centers all have shared goals. They strive to provide a visible, accessible, safe and welcoming place for youth, adults and families associated with the host school and the neighboring community. They all endeavor to encourage community engagement and leadership by establishing councils that promote input and by partnering with other agency providers in the community. In addition, the Beacon Centers seek to maintain a range of activities, provided by a well-trained, diverse and responsive staff, that promote short- and long-term positive outcomes for youth and adults. This chapter explores in turn each of the criteria assumed in the theory of change to be necessary for establishing a fully operational Beacon Center and for supporting the long-term outcomes of families, schools and communities.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- Are Beacon Centers visible, accessible, safe and welcoming to all? What strategies have been used to foster these characteristics?
- Do Beacon Centers encourage community engagement and leadership?
- Are staff well-trained, diverse and responsive?
- Is there a range of activities within or across the core competence areas that could be expected to support long-term outcomes?

The question of whether the Beacon Center is "welcoming to all" is touched on in this chapter but explored more fully in the next chapter, where we look closely at participation by youth and adults as a measure of this early outcome.

In addressing the research questions, this chapter uses information from several sources. We draw on extensive interviews conducted at four time points with Beacon staff, partner agency staff, teachers at the host schools, intermediary staff and Beacon stakeholders. We also analyze data obtained from the SFUSD to describe the population of youth served at the host schools during the 1998-1999 school year. We incorporate information gathered from a subset of youth—sixth and seventh graders who attend the host middle schools (but not necessarily the Beacon Centers)—who completed surveys during the school day. Finally, we analyze information from a subset of activities at each of the centers that was gathered by on-site researchers.

Are Beacon Centers Visible, Accessible, Safe and Welcoming to All?

One of the first and ongoing tasks the centers set for themselves was to create spaces that are visible, accessible, safe and welcoming to all community children, adolescents and families. Creating such an environment is seen as a precursor to active and ongoing participation by community members. Over the years, each center has made a significant effort to create and maintain these environmental attributes. The centers have done so through their staffing patterns and by altering the physical spaces

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available to them. Some strategies have been implemented in all or most of the centers, while others are site specific and have emerged out of local concerns or conditions.

Visibility

To ensure that the Beacon Centers are well used by community youth—those in the host schools and those in the surrounding neighborhoods—and adults, the centers rely on several tactics. Signs and banners advertising the presence of the Beacon Centers are placed in highly visible locations both in and outside the schools. The centers also print flyers that list their offerings by season. These flyers are printed in several languages, among them Russian, Spanish, Cantonese and Tagalog, so they will be accessible to community members who do not speak English. The centers also advertise in several languages on the radio and in community newspapers.

The Beacon staff have undertaken extensive outreach and recruitment efforts as well. Beacon staff attend school staff meetings, and school staff help to recruit youth to the centers. In the Valley Beacon Center, staff hand out information about their programs in the cafeteria during the school's lunch hour. At the high school that hosts the Ocean Beacon Center, Beacon staff make announcements over the public address system during the school year. In the Eastern Beacon Center, staff maintain a database with all the students' names and addresses and mail out flyers as new programs are developed. Even those students who are no longer actively participating in Beacon programs receive information.

Beacon Center staff felt that word of mouth and one-on-one conversations with youth worked best for advertising the centers and their programs, and both they and school day staff referred youth to the centers. Safety and support personnel hired by the Beacon Centers said they approach youth who are hanging out after school to persuade them to participate in Beacon programs as well.

One early challenge in youth recruitment was identifying who was responsible for it. Providers from agencies with which the Beacon staff had subcontracted believed it was the Beacon staff's responsibility to do the outreach and recruitment for all activities, while the Beacon staff thought the responsibility should be shared. As a result of this early confusion, several centers have better defined the strategies necessary to reach out and recruit effectively and who is responsible for that outreach. At the Valley Beacon Center, a staff person has been hired specifically to do outreach. His responsibility also includes educating providers on the best way to advertise their activities.

One measure of visibility is the proportion of host school students who are aware that there is a Beacon Center in the school that they can attend, whether or not they choose to do so. Findings from the Fall 1999 survey of middle-school sixth and seventh graders show a range among the number of host school students who have not heard of their Beacon Center. The proportions range from 7 percent at Summit, to 10 percent at Meadow, to 19 percent at Valley.

Accessibility

The Beacon Centers have made efforts that range from simple to complex to make their programs accessible to the communities they serve. Their efforts range from scheduling activities at convenient times to addressing physical barriers to accessibility. To make their offerings accessible, center activities, events and programs are free, and Beacon Centers offer programs in the early morning, during the day and in the evening to accommodate youth and parent schedules. The centers have also made themselves more accessible to parents and community adults by hiring staff who speak languages spoken in the community.

To be accessible, however, Beacon Centers also need to be located in places that youth can get to and from. For youth and children living in the immediate neighborhood, obstacles may include busy roads that young children cannot cross on their own or activities that last into the evening, after it becomes dark. For adolescents and children who attend the host school but do not live in the immediate neighborhood (a significant portion of the youth in all the schools), the main obstacle is transportation. This problem is more significant for elementary-school children than it is for middle-school or high-school youth because the younger children cannot take public transportation alone. The Eastern Beacon Center, therefore, faces the most significant barrier in this respect. About 50 percent of the school's population lives outside the immediate neighborhood, and a large portion of these children are Latinos from a community that is a 20-minute

bus ride away from the school. Elementary schools traditionally have no "late buses" to transport children who stay for extracurricular activities. Thus, the Beacon Center's after-school, summer and weekend activities are only available to children living outside the neighborhood if their parents or another adult can arrange transportation. To provide a partial solution, the Beacon Center runs lunchtime activities for those youth.

The centers face different levels of challenge. At one extreme, staff and community members at the Summit Beacon Center have lobbied to have a municipal bus stop placed near the school, which sits on top of a high hill and is particularly challenging to access. So far, the effort, which has involved local residents, city personnel, local agencies and Beacon staff, has resulted in a commitment from the city's transportation authority to create a bus stop on the hill, but construction has not yet begun since a number of issues (such as lighting) must first be addressed. At another extreme, the Valley Beacon Center is located in the heart of a busy residential community that has few hills and is easily accessible by public transportation.

One measure of the initiative's success in creating accessible centers is to examine youth's responses to survey questions about whether they have trouble getting home after activities. Results from the survey indicate that approximately three-quarters of the participating youth (ranging from 72% at Valley to 82% at Summit) do not experience problems getting home after Beacon activities. Accessibility, therefore, is a challenge for a significant minority of youth (ranging from 18% to 28%) who attend these middle-school centers where the survey was done.

Safe Places

The centers hire staff to create safe places.
Four of the five Beacon Centers have safety and support teams that were established to promote a sense of safety. The only site that has not established a formal team is located in Eastern Elementary School, a small school with restricted access through a central courtyard. Beacon staff did not think a team was necessary there.

The centers' safety and support teams vary in makeup. The centers located in middle schools hire community adults as team members. The Ocean Beacon Center, in contrast, felt that it needed staff with more security experience and hired the high school's security guards for after-school and summer employment. The size of the safety and support teams also varies: One center has five members, whereas another has three. (These numbers have been increasing over the years, as youth and parent participation increases.)

In general, safety and support personnel are stationed at the school's front door when the building is open, and they make sure that all persons who come into the building belong there. The youth check in and, at one center, are given a badge for identification. Although safety and support personnel provide security to ensure that adults and youth feel safe in the building, they dress in plainclothes and try to promote a friendly atmosphere. Staff on the team reported that they learn the names and faces of everyone who comes through the door, which they believe increases their effectiveness. They think that having safety and support personnel available and in view makes youth feel safe; therefore, the youth can focus more on the Beacon activities.

Indeed, in the three middle schools where sixth- and seventh-grade youth were surveyed during the school day, almost all (87% to 89%) who said they had been to the Beacon Center agreed that it is a safe place to be after school. The large proportion of youth who view the Beacon Centers as safe is laudatory, especially given that the centers are located in large urban schools in low-income communities, where youth often have not felt safe. We speculate that youth feel safe at the centers as a result of the safety and support personnel and the other activities that are taking place at the schools while the centers are open. As one young Beacon Center attendant said during a focus group:

> *You feel safer. Like if three kids want to beat you up [laugh], and you don't want to fight...they help. Safety and support is usually around after school. Sometimes you see them during school, but usually it's after school.*

Parents, too, noted that they were pleased by the presence of the safety and support personnel. Parents at the Meadow Beacon Center observed that the safety and support team provides oversight not only within the building, where Beacon participants are, but also outside, where non-Beacon participants hang out and occasionally get into scuffles.

In addition to helping the youth and their parents feel at ease, the safety and support team may cut down on some of the problems that Beacon Centers in other cities face with respect to protecting school property. One of the concerns we did not hear from school personnel in San Francisco that we have heard in other cities with extended-service schools (Walker et al., 2000) was for potential damage to the school building or loss of property. We speculate that the presence of paid supervisory personnel in the Beacon Centers is instrumental in calming such concerns.

Adequate lighting is a challenge to safety that must be addressed in partnerships with the schools.
Achieving a safe, welcoming and accessible environment does not only mean providing adequate adult supervision to head off potential problems; it also means attending to the schools' physical facilities. Traditionally, school buildings have been designed for daytime activities. Beacon Centers operate in the evenings as well as during the day, and darkness comes early in winter. Therefore, the Beacon Centers have faced the challenge of lighting the schools and the areas around them to provide safer environments. The Eastern Beacon Center has purchased portable spotlights to place outside the school on nights when the center is operating. This option has worked primarily because the school has limited access and only one area needs to be lit. For centers in host schools with much larger grounds, portable spotlights are not a solution. Center staff continue to work with the intermediary and the SFUSD to define the extent of the problem and find viable solutions.

Do Beacon Centers Foster Community Engagement and Leadership?

A key characteristic of the Beacon model is that local communities are to be involved in planning, implementing and participating in activities. By specifying "local community," it is hoped that not only will neighborhood agency and school personnel get involved but that neighborhood adults and youth will as well.

The Beacon Centers have met with mixed success in fostering community engagement. They have been most successful in attracting adults and youth to program activities and in attracting partner agencies from the community to implement programs at or for the centers. (Chapter V presents detailed information on the number of youth and adults who participate.)

The centers employ neighborhood adults as safety and support team staff and as activity providers. The Meadow Beacon Center, in particular, has partially compensated for its surrounding community's low number of youth-service agencies by hiring community residents as providers.

Although the centers have shown that they can entice neighborhood adults and youth to provide and participate in activities, they have faced greater challenges in attracting adults and youth to leadership roles in the centers. At the beginning of the initiative, each community convened a planning group that included agency partners, staff from the lead agencies, school staff and community residents. Group members helped identify the needs of the community and in some cases laid out a preliminary plan of action. Neighborhood residents—both adults and youth—played a small role in the original planning councils. As implementation got under way, however, the importance of the councils diminished, and the responsibility for convening the councils was turned over to the Beacon directors. Since then, Beacon staff have continued to work with their community councils, but they report that community engagement on the councils is low. The councils meet irregularly, attendance is sporadic, and Beacon staff are not sure what role they hope the councils will play.

In our experience, sporadic attendance and lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities are typical for community councils. The initial enthusiasm of planning often gives way to confusion over the role the council should play as management is turned over to professional staff (Walker et al., 1999). In addition, the coordination of a Beacon Center is complex, and the work of populating community councils and convening meetings does not seem to have been given high priority by the initiative's management. It has not, for example, emerged as a formal agenda topic at meetings of the steering committee, sustainability committee,[1] or Beacon directors.

Although adult and youth leadership within the community councils has been difficult to achieve, evidence from surveys of middle schoolers indicates that Beacon Center youth are afforded a range of formal, informal and representation-type leadership

opportunities and are more likely than their non-Beacon middle-school peers to be involved in leadership roles. (These data are reported more fully in Chapter VI.)

Are Staff Well-Trained, Diverse and Responsive?

Each Beacon Center has a core of full- and part-time staff that ranges in number from 7 to 21 people. Payrolled staff include directors, site managers, adult and youth program coordinators, office staff, community outreach specialists, safety and support team members, administrative support and activity providers. In addition, the centers subcontract with teachers, community residents and agencies to provide activities to youth and their families. The theory of change states that the people who staff the centers should be well-trained, diverse and responsive to the youth and families who participate in center activities. Well-trained staff are a prerequisite to implementing high-quality activities. In a highly diverse community, having staff who reflect that diversity, understand the cultural climate from which youth and families come, and speak the language was also assumed to be crucial. Finally, the theory of change assumes that staff must be responsive to the participants who attend their centers for two reasons. Staff who are responsive are more likely to attract and retain participants. In addition, forming supportive relationships with both adults and youth is a crucial mainstay of youth development, and responsive staff are more likely to forge such relationships.

Staff Experience

Staff training varies widely across and within the Beacon Centers. Beacon directors are among the most experienced of the Beacon staff; they typically have had several years of administrative experience in other youth-serving organizations. Other staff's experience ranges widely, from having a few years of experience in other youth-serving organizations (such as the YMCA), to having relatively recently graduated from college with some experience in youth work, to (in a few cases) having worked as a paraprofessional in a school. As in many youth-serving organizations, the staff who provide activities are relatively young—many are in their 20s.

Staff from agencies that are contracted by the Beacon Centers to provide such youth development activities as leadership groups and performing arts activities have backgrounds similar to Beacon staff: They are young men and women with a few years' experience in youth-serving organizations.

Staff Training

Youth workers in this country, like the Beacon staff and other Beacon providers, rarely have had formal education in youth work. The closest thing to such formal background that some have had is social-work training. Many youth workers receive on-the-job training, however, and there are several opportunities for such training in the SFBI.

One of the intermediary's roles has been to provide training in youth development principles and practices. In particular, the intermediary runs a learning network that brings providers together to discuss adolescent development and effective youth-serving practices. While coordinating staff from most of the Beacon Centers have been part of the network, individual providers—residents, teachers and even some Beacon Center staff—have not. Instead, the coordinating Beacon staff have become responsible for transmitting youth development principles and effective practices to their providers. They do so in several ways. Most commonly, they dispense ideas and information in regular Beacon Center staff meetings. In addition, the Meadow Beacon Center has prepared a manual for providers that includes not only center rules and regulations but also information about the youth development framework that the center would like providers to implement in all activities. In that center, providers are also asked to consider how their activities reflect youth development principles.

Although only a relatively small number of Beacon Center staff (approximately three in any given center) have participated in the learning network, the intermediary's role in staff development and training is fairly substantial. The intermediary provides specific training to centers and their staff. The Eastern Beacon Center, for example, had a small group of disruptive youth in the center and requested that the intermediary teach staff how to manage the behavioral problems and to provide training in child abuse and conflict management. The youth-program coordinators from the Beacon Centers also met with intermediary staff to discuss some specific concerns that came up in their jobs.

It is also important that agencies providing activities at the centers have participated in the intermediary's Learning Network. Staff at these agencies report that the network provides a useful framework for thinking about youth development activities, and they have incorporated what they have learned into their agencies' staff development. Thus, the intermediary has played a role in providing training on a citywide basis as well.

Another important source of staff development are the agencies that provide Beacon activities. The Bay Area Youth Agency Consortium (BAYAC) supplies the centers with AmeriCorps members, who, in addition to working at the centers, spend Fridays at BAYAC, where they receive training in literacy, youth development, budgeting, time management, CPR and first aid, and meeting facilitation. The YMCA, another Beacon provider, provides training in, among other areas, the principles of youth work, child-abuse prevention, incorporating leadership into youth programs and the legal issues involved in working with youth.

There are, therefore, numerous opportunities for staff development available both within the initiative and within agencies connected to the initiative. However, community residents who serve as individual subcontractors have reported limited access to training. Because the training the centers provide is typically on-the-job training, subcontracted individuals, who are not under direct Beacon supervision, do not receive this benefit. In addition, the centers do not provide more formal ongoing training opportunities for subcontracted individuals.

Staff Diversity

Many organizations strive to hire staff that reflect the ethnic composition of the community they serve. The task presents challenges: Labor markets are segregated by both gender and race. In a given field, the potential pool of staff members may be limited to specific groups of people. In addition, highly qualified individuals may be in high demand. In some cases, organizations may not follow through with their goal of employing a diverse staff for other reasons.

The Beacon Centers face all these challenges. We do not have a comprehensive list that identifies staff and agency providers' specific training, work experience and ethnicity, but our observations of activities lead us to believe that the centers have struck a relatively fair balance in finding highly qualified staff who reflect the diversity of the youth and adults served by the centers. In the Eastern Beacon Center, the activity instructors tend to be either white or Asian. Because so many of the youth there have limited English proficiency, it is particularly important that the center provide activities in Chinese to attract neighborhood residents. In the Meadow Beacon Center, in the heart of a largely Latino district, a number of providers are Latino, and at least three are fluent in Spanish. In the other centers, the ethnicity of the instructors is more broadly distributed among Asian, African-American, Latino and white staff, reflecting the diversity of the population of the youth and adults served.

Staff Responsiveness

Staff responsiveness can be measured at different levels. At the center planning and design level, the division of responsibilities among the staff and early planning councils is an indicator of staff willingness to listen to the different groups of people served by the Beacon Centers. Youth-program coordinators focus on and pay attention to the needs of the youth; adult-program coordinators work with parents and adult community residents to design programs of interest to them; and site managers and Beacon directors respond to the broader needs of school personnel, the community and partner agencies.

Responsiveness can also be measured at the level of the youth activity providers. Our observations of activities assessed several attributes of the adult-youth relationships in a subset of activities at each Beacon Center, including adult responsiveness (encouragement and support of youth's efforts), instrumental support (helping the youth understand and succeed at the task at hand during the activity), and the emotional quality of the relationship (e.g., the staff and youth appeared to enjoy each other's company). Summary measures of these qualities on a rating scale of 1 (not at all positive) to 5 (very positive) varied across activities but ranged primarily from a low of 3 to a high of 5. Seven of the activities observed were given ratings lower than the midpoint of the scale. The activities with the lowest ratings of adult responsiveness and instrumental and emotional support tended to be those that were more instructional in nature, for example, after-school learning activities, chess club and Russian-language lessons. In contrast, activities with the highest ratings (a 5 on the scale) were

mostly leadership activities with high levels of youth planning and involvement, such as Changemakers, SLASH, Girls Take Charge and youth councils.

Finally, our surveys of middle-school youth assessed the extent to which such youth who attended the Beacon Centers felt that adults at the centers as a whole supported them (e.g., paid attention to them, cared about them, would help them out). On this measure of staff responsiveness, we found a significant number of youth who, at the time of the survey, reported *no* adult supports at the Beacon Centers. The number ranged from 64 percent at Meadow to 27 percent at Summit.

The results from the observations and surveys are described more fully in Chapter VI.

Do the Centers Provide a Range of Activities that Support Long-Term Outcomes?

A strong feature of the Beacon Centers is that they organize a wide range of programs that are implemented by a diverse array of providers: Beacon staff, individual contractors and agencies. The number of activities and services provided by the centers during Fall 1999 ranged from 14 to 24 activities in distinct content areas (some activities had two or more sections—they are not counted separately). Activities are scheduled during lunch, after school, in the evenings and during the summer, and they range from daily and weekly programs to single-time events. Every site provides activities for youth of all ages as well as for adults.

The intention behind the initiative, however, was not simply to provide activities for youth and adults in their communities solely to keep them busy, but also to provide a range of experiences that challenge youth and enrich their lives. Therefore, the planning group identified five core competence program areas assumed to contribute to positive youth outcomes. These core areas are education, career development, health, leadership, and arts and recreation. Each Beacon Center is responsible for implementing activities that cover each of the five areas.

How have the centers fared in implementing activities across the core areas?

Table 4.1 lists each center's Fall 1999 activities by center-identified core competence. The table shows a breadth of opportunities within each core area, especially arts and recreation, and education.

In some respects, the sites' focus on education and arts and recreation is typical of other youth development efforts we have observed. For example, volunteer-based youth-serving organizations, such as the YMCA and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, tend most often to provide youth with structured and unstructured sports, other recreational activities and educational programs (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). In Community Change for Youth Development, a P/PV initiative designed to increase developmental supports and opportunities in targeted neighborhoods, sites most readily implemented recreational activities that filled youth's non-school hours and provided adult support and guidance. The implementation of career-development programs and those that aimed to support youth through critical adolescent transitions posed significant challenges for sites (Walker, forthcoming). In the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds' Extended Service Schools Initiative, arts and recreation and educational activities constituted over three-quarters of the programming provided in the after-school hours (Walker et al., 2000).

Although the sites classify each activity as covering only one core area of competence, the areas of coverage may not in fact be mutually exclusive. For example, leadership may play a role within a range of activities as well as be a key component of certain group activities. Likewise, a career-development activity may work to enhance writing skills, while a recreational activity may focus on mental or physical health and well-being. Nonetheless, even allowing for the restrictions in classification, the opportunities for leadership, career development and health-related activities are more limited than are the other opportunities.

Although activities in career development, leadership, and health are relatively scarce across the sites, the programs that exist tend to be creative and innovative. For example, the Meadow Beacon Center has an online magazine, *BAMboozled!*, that is written and produced by students and aims to challenge negative stereotypes about youth. The Valley Beacon Center offers a career-development class

Table 4.1
Program Diversity by Site for Fall 1999

Core Area	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Arts and Recreation	Creative Movement Lunch Bunch—Exploring the World Super Saturday It's a Small World Boys' Club Girls' Circle Kids' Night Out	Urban Artworks Afro-Brazilian Percussion and Dance: beginning and intermediate HOOPs SHERO: girls' support program Everett Middle School Soccer Tournament As Warriors Political Theater Ultimate Frisbee Winter Break	Teen Center Friday Night Outings Fresh lunch: sports and recreation Hip Hop Dance Breakdancing Go Mighty Panther Middle School Program Soccer Winter Break Trips	Beginning Photography Polynesian Dance American Kickboxing Lion Dance Group Creative fun Fun and Games Arts and Crafts Basketball SNBC Hoops	Capoeira Cooking YMCA-TOSS program Kids in the Park Soul'd Out Productions Open Recreation Girls' Self Defense Real Options for City Kids Asian-Pacific Club GASA Movie Club Hip Hop and Afro-Brazilian Dance Youth Arts and Crafts Winter Recess
Career Development	High School Club	Youth Mentors for After-School Learning Academy Youth In Action B.O.S.S.	Job Bank Web Design Computer Programming Ready to Work	BAMboozled! Exploration in Art Explore the Internet Web Design	Student Incentive Store Career Resource Center Mayor's Office of Youth Employment
Education	Child Development Program Middle School Club Learning and Enrichment After-School Program for students in grades 3-5 English Literacy and Life Skills Back on Track one-on-one tutoring	Tutoring Help with Elementary Reading Youth Computer Class Book Club Theater Academy Girls' Poetry In-class tutoring Lunchtime book club	Tutoring: evening and afternoon, etc. Late library, etc.	Read Aloud Math assistance, etc. ESL for Russian children Youth Theater Storytelling Tutoring	Tutoring Talking with TJ Star Lab Academic programs for children from feeder elementary schools
Health		S-Team Everett Middle School Talking Circles	PROACT Girls Take Charge	SNBC Family Counseling Services Self Defense for Young Women Juvenile Justice Case Management	School Coordinated-Care Team Beacon Healthy Start Collaboration
Leadership	Youth Advisory Committee	Kid Power Student Leaders Against Sexual Harassment Youth Council	Teen Council See for Yourself Community Service Just Between Us Girls	Urban Music Changemakers Community Outreach	Changemakers Peer Resources GASA (Girls' After-School Association) Kids in the Park

A Sampling of Programs at the Centers

On our visits to each site, we had the opportunity to observe numerous activities. Below is a description of one program at each center. Collectively, the descriptions illustrate the range of positive programming available to youth.

Just Between Us Girls is a support, social and service group for high-school girls. The group discusses women's issues and meets with guest speakers. Once a semester, girls do a community-service project. In our observations of the group's activities, girls appeared to be developing positive relationships with the adult facilitator and with each other. Girls smiled, joked and teased each other playfully and, during group discussions, eagerly shared their opinions and personal stories with the group.

Beginning Photography offers middle-school students the opportunity to learn how to take pictures, develop and enlarge them, and make portfolios of their work. They then compete among themselves in a "Portfolio of the Month" contest. The general tone of the class is professional and serious, with most students working individually and with great concentration on their own projects. More advanced students assume informal leadership roles and assist others in enlarging pictures.

The Learning and Enrichment After-School Program (LEAP) is an academic tutoring and recreational activity for elementary-school children. For the first hour of the daily, two-hour program, students receive homework help and work individually. During the second hour, they take part in such activities as arts and crafts, outdoor recreation and storytelling.

After-School Reading is a literacy skill-building activity for elementary-school children. Children complete their homework, practice reading aloud, write poetry and study vocabulary. Students work individually and in small groups, and adults circulate around the room and provide help as needed.

Urban Artwork focuses on public art and community awareness. High-school youth work on designs and proposals for public art installations, as well as the production of art, such as ceramic mural panels. They work collaboratively on projects and, during the activities, talk about their lives and personal issues.

during the school day that allows small groups of students to explore the responsibilities and requirements of a variety of careers. In addition, the youth are given the opportunity to provide school staff with administrative support, which is also scarce at the school. The Ocean Beacon Center provides students with help on the college application process.

There are differences in the degree to which the centers cover the core content areas. The Eastern Beacon Center has only one career-development activity—a high-school club. The Ocean Beacon Center, in contrast, has four career-development activities, including a job bank, but only two educational activities. Variations in host schools' demographics, lead agencies and community needs contribute to these modest differences. For example, the Eastern Beacon Center is located in an elementary school in a community that has expressed strong desire for educational support, and the lead agency has traditionally provided child-care services. At Eastern, there is no obvious institutional strength for building career-development activities: The age group of the youth in the school does not lend itself easily to career development, and the community has emphasized the need for education. In contrast, the Ocean Beacon Center is located in a high school, where career development is often important to students.

Looking at how Beacon Center programs cover the core competence areas provides one perspective on the initiative's breadth of programming. Looking at the range of activities within the arts and recreation and educational core areas provides another. Within these two areas, the sites show considerable breadth and diversity in programming. Almost all the centers have a mix of structured and unstructured programming, thereby providing youth with opportunities for challenging activities as well as with opportunities to socialize with peers in a safe environment. The centers' access to space—both dedicated and shared with the school day staff—influences the degree to which they can provide unstructured programming. For example, the Eastern and Meadow Beacon centers, both of which face fairly severe space restrictions in their host schools, cannot provide much unstructured programming at the schools, although unstructured activities have taken place at the satellite administration offices, which have come to provide important program space.

Structured programs, however—those that aim to accomplish specific goals within a given period—are diverse with respect to activity content.

Activities also vary from season to season: During the summer, the centers have more access to athletic spaces and run more sports programs than they do in the Fall and Spring. Centers also vary their programming on the basis of attendance at previous season's programs. Each center, therefore, tends to have a core of programs that it has developed over the years and a group of relatively short-lived programs. Core programs include Afro-Brazilian drumming and dance at the Valley Beacon Center and the Lunch Bunch club at the Eastern Beacon Center, which serves youth who cannot attend after-school programs. The Summit Beacon Center, in contrast, which has access to a lot of school space, and the Ocean Beacon Center, which has a dedicated teen room, have regular unstructured time for their Open Recreation and Teen Center programs, respectively.

Summary

This chapter has explored the progress and strategies the Beacon Centers have used to create visible, accessible, safe and welcoming environments that potentially provide and support a wide range of developmental experiences. Centers advertise their programs and offerings using multiple methods to promote visibility; services and programs are free and are offered at convenient times to provide accessibility; and safety and support personnel and enhanced lighting contribute to the centers' ability to offer a safe setting for program participants.

At times, ensuring that the centers are safe and accessible means making changes to the physical infrastructure of the school or surrounding neighborhood. Such changes are difficult to achieve because they are often outside the purview of Beacon staff and require the actions of the school district or other city agencies. At the outset of the initiative, the planners realized that such changes might be needed to move the initiative forward. How that happens is detailed in Chapter IX.

A team of Beacon staff experienced in youth work and with background and ongoing training in youth development practices and issues provides a core group of managers and activity providers to oversee and support high-quality activities for youth and families. Beacon Center staff and activity providers also reflect the language and cultural diversity of the centers, enabling them to provide programs for community members who might otherwise experience language barriers. Although staff appear responsive to the community's interests and to the youth who attend Beacon activities, youth's perspectives on the responsiveness of the adults in the program are not as favorable, something that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VI.

Finally, this chapter has shown that the centers provide a diverse mix of activities, although more activities focus primarily on two of the five core areas of competence defined by the initiative: education and arts and recreation. Owing to the dearth of activities in areas such as leadership and career development and health, it may be too early in the initiative to expect youth participating in the Beacon Centers to show improved competence in these areas. However, as we will see in Chapter VI, leadership opportunities can be available outside of activities designed specifically to develop leadership skills.

In sum, this chapter has looked at the early steps the initiative deemed necessary for Beacon Centers to become welcoming to youth and families. Creating the space is the first step. Engaging youth and adults in the centers is another. The next chapter looks at individual-level participation in the Beacon Centers.

The Youth Participants

Attendance at Beacon Centers is voluntary; thus the number of families and youth who attend rests on the visibility, accessibility and appeal of the centers. As we saw in the last chapter, the Beacon Centers have been developing strategies to ensure that they are visible, accessible and safe. The ultimate test of the centers' appeal, however, rests on their ability to connect youth and families to myriad available programs, activities and services and to support their ongoing participation. In addition, individuals' involvement must be frequent enough to have a real and lasting effect. Thus, in this chapter, we analyze how many people are served, whether the centers are reaching their intended populations, and the levels and patterns of participation across the core areas.

Specifically, we will answer the following questions:

- Who goes to the Beacon Centers and how often?
- How do the youth who go to the centers differ from those who do not?
- Do youth participate in a range of activities at the Beacon Centers?

This chapter draws on information gathered from several different sources. First, it draws on information kept in the Beacon Centers' MIS database. Student data from the SFUSD for the 1998-1999 school year are also used. Finally, this chapter uses information gathered from the middle school survey to compare youth who use the Beacon Centers with those who do not.

Participation in Activities

Early in the initiative, the stakeholders set a goal that each center would provide services and activities to approximately 150 to 200 people per day, or between 500 and 1,000 people a year, with 75 percent of the participants between the ages of 10 and 17. These numbers were set to correspond to the capacity of the space available and to the allocated funding, taking into consideration the SFBI's intention to provide high-quality services to those who attend Beacon programs. According to reports submitted by the Beacon Centers (covering a one-year period from July 1, 1999, through June 30, 2000), the centers appear to be meeting their goal of serving between 500 and 1,000 people over the course of a year. The numbers served by each center are provided in Table 5.1.

Although the centers are meeting their overall numeric goals, several centers have not consistently met the expected level of service on a daily basis. In order to calculate average daily attendance, we reviewed one month of information from the Beacon Centers' MIS records. We selected October 1999, the month for which we had the most activity reports, the fewest holidays and the least missing data. We found that the average number of youth and adults served on a daily basis ranged from 51 at Valley to 174 at Meadow (with 126 at Eastern, 127 at Summit and 152 at Ocean per day). The two centers that serve the most people daily (and meet the expectation to serve at least 150 people a day) are located in the largest schools, with school enrollment populations of 2,367 and 1,260, respectively.

Table 5.1
Beacon Center Participation for 7/1/99 to 6/30/00

Participants	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Host school level	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle	Middle
Number of unduplicated youth participants	491	673	610	1372	600
Number of unduplicated adult participants	150	246	764	243	182
Total number served	641	919	1374	1615	782

Source: Beacon Centers' year-end reports.

All the Beacon Centers devote considerable resources and effort toward serving the adult participants with a diverse set of center activities and community events. The number of adults attracted to the Beacon Centers display the success they have had appealing to these community members, who constitute about 25 percent of the total participants at each site. Although the adults are an important constituency of the Beacon Centers, the remainder of this chapter and the next describe the youth participants.

Who goes to the centers?

We used four months of daily attendance and membership information gathered by the Beacon Centers (between September 1 and December 31, 1999) to describe the youth who attend each of the five Beacon Centers. Descriptions of the youth's age, ethnicity and gender and information on whether they attend the host school or are from the local community are reported in Table 5.2. As hoped for by the initiative's planners, participation in the Beacon Centers shows a diverse mix of youth.

Age

The modal age of the youth participants at each Beacon Center reflects the age group served by the host school, but the age distributions across all five centers tend to support the planners' assumption that middle schools are most accessible to a wide range of participants. In each of the three Beacon Centers located in middle schools, approximately half of the youth (ranging from 44% to 53%) served in Fall 1999 were middle-school youth, with the remainder split between elementary- and high-school students. In contrast, the Beacon Centers located in the elementary and high schools have participation patterns that heavily favor the age of the students at the schools. At the Ocean Beacon Center, which is located in a high school, 81 percent of the youth who participated in Beacon activities were of high-school age, with another 17 percent middle-school youth (many of whom participate at the middle-school satellite across the street). At the Eastern Beacon Center, which is located in an elementary school, 71 percent of the youth are of elementary-school age. At all of the centers, the number of high-school youth who attend is considerable, given the difficulty that most youth-serving organizations have in attracting older adolescents.

Ethnicity

In general, the ethnic breakdown of youth served by the Beacon Centers mirrors that of the host schools. One exception is the Eastern Beacon Center, where almost all the youth who attend the center are Asian, even though a significant number of the school's students are Latino youth (37%) who are bused in from other neighborhoods.

Gender

The gender breakdown indicates that, even among the older youth, equal members of males and females are attending the Beacon Centers. This finding is in contrast to some youth-serving organizations (Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the YMCA), which tend to serve males in significantly greater proportions than females—in part because

Table 5.2
Ethnic Characteristics, Grade Level and Gender of Beacon Center Youth Participants Who Attend Host School from September 1 to December 31, 1999

Characteristics	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Host school level	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle	Middle
Number of unduplicated youth participants	225	365	446	476	480
Youth grade level*					
Pre-K	—	1%	1%	—	3%
Elementary	71%	19%	—	19%	34%
Middle	6%	51%	17%	53%	44%
High School	21%	20%	81%	27%	5%
Not coded*	2%	9%	1%	1%	14%
Youth ethnicity*					
African-American	—	17%	11%	8%	23%
Asian	95%	13%	58%	56%	34%
Latino	3%	50%	5%	7%	11%
White	—	3%	7%	19%	2%
Other	—	9%	9%	10%	20%**
Not coded*	1%	9%	11%	—	10%
Male	48%	51%	50%	50%	51%
Enrolled in host school	25%	53%	29%	25%	28%
Not coded*	45%	25%	62%	63%	35%

* Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.
** 16 percent of total participants are Samoan.
* Note: In every category, the information had not been updated for a portion of youth in the MIS database. In particular, the school the youth attends was missing for one-quarter to two-thirds of the youth.
Source: Beacon Center MIS data, 9/1/99 to 12/31/99.

of their emphasis on sports teams, leagues and tournaments (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). Phase I of the evaluation of the New York City Beacons Initiative also found that attendance among males was greater (Warren et al., 1999). However, the roughly equal number of males and females who attend the Beacon Centers in San Francisco is consistent with what was found in a national survey of eighth graders conducted in 1988 (Quinn, 1999). The statistic for the San Francisco Beacon Centers is encouraging, and suggests that they are providing activities that attract girls; it also reflects their emphasis on arts, educational and cultural programming in addition to the sports and social recreation programs that generally draw large numbers of boys.

Host School

According to the centers' MIS data, at four of the Beacon Centers,[1] approximately one-quarter of the youth attending Beacon Center activities also attend the host school. At the Valley Beacon Center, however, more than half (53%) of the Beacon Center youth are students at the host school. School staff's efforts in advertising the centers and the visibility of the centers in the schools may contribute to the significant numbers of youth from the host schools who participate in the centers' activities. Also at the Valley Beacon Center, in which the proportion of participants from the host school is particularly high, two Beacon classes are taught during the day by Beacon staff (B.O.S.S. and Talking Circles).

Table 5.3

Comparison of Middle-School Beacon Participants versus Non-Participants at Three Host Schools, 1998-1999 School Year[a]

Characteristics	Valley		Meadow		Summit	
	Beacon Youth from Host School	Non-Beacon Youth from Host School	Beacon Youth from Host School	Non-Beacon Youth from Host School	Beacon Youth from Host School	Non-Beacon Youth from Host School
	N=82	N=110	N=195	N=417	N=127	N=111
Free or reduced-price lunch recipient	63%	75%'	46%	39%	64%*	77%
Ethnicity[b]						
African- American	29%	7%	12%	5%	35%	9%
Asian	11%	21%	46%	53%	38%	67%
Latino	41%	50%	7%	7%	13%	11%
White	7%	6%	19%	22%	2%	1%
Other	11%	16%	16%	13%	13%	13%
Male	44%'	57%	56%	53%	65%	62%
Grade level						
Six	39%	46%	40%	48%	45%**	61%
Seven	61%	54%	60%	52%	55%	39%
Grade-point average (1 to 4)	2.4***	3.1	2.9***	3.1	2.5***	3.1
Math NCE (1 to 99, 99 is high)	35.1***	45.5	66.0*	70.0	45.4***	54.6
Reading NCE (1 to 99)	36.2'	40.9	55.0*	59.2	41.3	43.4
Suspensions (proportion who have at least one suspension)	13%	4%	1%	0%	3%'	0%
Attendance (proportion of school days youth attended)	90%	95%	97%	97%	95%	98%
School engagement (1-4, 4 is high-level engagement)[c]	3.2*	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.3
Positive response to problems or arguments (1-4, 4 is most positive)[d]	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8'	2.7
Passive response to problems or arguments (1-4, 4 is most passive)[e]	2.4'	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.4
Self-efficacy (1-4, 4 is high level of self-efficacy)[f]	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2
# Peer supports[g]	3.6'	3.0	3.4	3.5	3.1*	2.5
# Family supports[g]	4.1*	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.2
# School adult supports[g]	3.6	3.2	2.9*	2.6	3.2	2.8

' p<.10
* p<.05
** p<.01
*** p<.001

[a] The number of youth responding is different from the number of middle-school youth reported in Table V.2 because these data are from a subsample of middle-school youth who also attend the host school.
[b] Ethnicity distributions were significantly different at p<.001, p<.05 and p<.001 for Valley, Meadow and Summit, respectively.
[c] School engagement example: "I pay attention in class."
[d] Positive response to challenge: "When I have a problem or argument with someone, I make sure it gets fixed."
[e] Passive response: "When I have a problem or argument with someone, I don't talk to them."
[f] Self-efficacy: "I can depend on myself."
[g] Number of supports who: "Pay attention, I can go to for help or advice."

Source: Middle school youth survey, Fall 1998, and SFUSD school records database.

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How do the youth who attend the Beacon Centers differ from those who do not?

One criticism of voluntary after-school programs has been that they only serve the "good kids" and do not reach the youth who really need their services (Olsen, 2000). The Beacon Centers strive to welcome all youth. To examine their success in doing so, we drew on data that allowed us to compare middle-school youth from the host school who attend the Beacon Center with those from the host school who do not attend it. In particular, we examined information from school records (GPA, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, attendance and suspensions, and standardized test scores) and from youth surveys (self-efficacy, level of family and peer support, reaction to difficult situations, school engagement and support from school adults)[3] for sixth and seventh graders who attend the Valley, Meadow and Summit middle schools. For the youth at these three schools, we have survey and school database information from the 1998-1999 school year that allows us to examine how similar Beacon participants are to their school peers who do not participate in center activities.[4] Table 5.3 provides means and frequencies for the variables we examined.

Differences That Emerge

Sixth- and seventh-grade Beacon participants differ most from their non-Beacon peers in ethnicity, grade-point averages, math test scores and school attendance and suspensions. The information from the 1998-1999 school year indicates that all three Beacon Centers attracted fewer Asian youth and more African-American youth than would be expected on the basis of the schools' student populations. In addition, we find that Beacon youth have significantly lower GPAs and standardized test scores in math. Two of the Beacon Centers serve proportionately more youth who have been suspended from school and (perhaps as a result) fewer youth who have attended all days of school. Additionally, at two schools, reading test scores differed, with Beacon youth tending to score lower than non-Beacon youth.

These findings, taken together, provide some indication that the Beacon Centers are reaching the youth who stand to benefit most from academic enrichment. In addition, suspension rates indicate that the centers are not just serving the "good kids."

Similarities

On the rest of the measures, we found that the youth who participate in Beacon programs are similar to their school peers who do not. They report similar levels of family, peer and school support; school engagement; reaction to problems or arguments; and self-efficacy. Where there are differences on those measures at different centers, however, Beacon youth tend to report higher levels of support. There was also a small but statistically significant difference at two schools in free or reduced-price lunch status—with Beacon youth less likely to receive this benefit than non-Beacon youth.

What is the intensity of their participation?

Many people sign up for or try out an organization but do not become fully engaged by it; they therefore may not participate with enough regularity for their involvement to make a difference in their lives. Knowing the overall number of individuals who are "touched" by the Beacon Centers is informative for determining their effect on the community but is less helpful for determining their effect on the individual. Therefore, we examined the Beacon Centers' attendance and membership records more closely to gather information about the intensity of youth participation—a factor that should be related to the role the centers play in the youth's lives and to the centers' potential to have a positive influence on youth development.

In order to measure how often youth attended the centers, we selected one month of MIS data attendance records. We only included youth who had attended the centers at least once that month—the month of October 1999.[5] The frequencies are reported in Table 5.4. The table shows differences between centers in how often youth tend to use the centers. For example, at the Eastern, Ocean and Meadow Beacon centers, a quarter or more of the youth came 13 or more times over the course of the month (about every day or almost every day the center was open), with the proportion as high as one-third at Eastern. Fewer people participated as frequently at the Summit Beacon Center, but almost 50 percent of youth came seven or more times a month. In contrast, at Valley, very few youth (21%) came that often. There, most came fewer than six times a month (or once a week or less). These patterns of participation may reflect several dynamics. First, younger children, whose parents often have considerable say in how they spend their time, are

Table 5.4
Youth Participation at the Beacon Centers in October 1999

Characteristics	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Host school level	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle	Middle
Attendance*	N=209	N=200	N=309	N=431	N=364
Once or twice	15%	38%	31%	18%	31%
3 to 6 times (about once a week)	35%	42%	33%	45%	20%
7 to 12 times (about two to three times a week)	11%	16%	11%	14%	39%
13+ times (every day, or almost every day)	36%	5%	26%	27%	10%

* Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.
Source: Beacon Center MIS.

more likely to attend after-school programs than older youth (Warren et al., 1999). Thus, one might expect that the Eastern Beacon Center would have high daily attendance. In addition, the centers vary in their after-school academic offerings. The Valley Beacon Center, which has low daily attendance, does not have an after-school learning program that requires daily participation. In contrast, Eastern, Ocean and Meadow attracted state-funded after-school learning programs with mandatory attendance requirements.

Are they participating in a range of activities?

As described earlier, one goal for the Beacon Centers is to have the adults and youth participate in a range of activities. In order to meet this goal, centers aimed to offer activities in each of the five core areas. In Chapter IV, we described the breadth of activity offerings for each center and determined that some core areas are better developed than others. Table 5.5 presents information about the range of activities in which individuals participate. We have found that most youth—60 percent to 84 percent—are participating in only one activity, despite the variety of offerings provided.

Research on national, site-based voluntary youth-serving organizations showed a positive relationship between engagement in multiple types of activities and the levels of supports and opportunities that youth experience (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). In that study, activities were categorized into four core areas: leadership, sports and recreation, arts and educational enrichment. Youth who participated in multiple activities within the same category (e.g., basketball, soccer and volleyball) did not show as positive an experience as those who participated in activities that cut across areas (e.g., homework help, graphic arts and soccer), regardless of how often the youth came or what their tenure at the organization was. When we collapse the Beacon activities into their respective core areas, the proportion of youth participating in more than one core area ranges from 13 percent at the Eastern Beacon Center to 24 percent at the Summit Beacon Center. Compared with the Gambone and Arbreton study, these proportions are slightly higher than those of the YMCA (which averaged about 10% of youth participating in more than one core area) but lower than those of Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Girls Incorporated centers (which averaged 39% and 50%, respectively).[8]

Table 5.5
Number of Different Activities in Which Beacon Youth Participated over a Four-Month Period, September 1 to December 31, 1999

	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Host school level	Elementary	Middle	High	Middle	Middle
Unduplicated count of youth participants	N=225	N=365	N=446	N=476	N=480
Number of different activities youth participated in between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 1999*					
0†	1%	9%	2%	0%	0%
1	84%	60%	62%	66%	62%
2	15%	18%	22%	16%	15%
3	0%	13%	14%	18%	22%

* Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.
† Some youth may end up in the 0 category because they register but never attend or because the centers have not fully updated the database with all activity attendance.
Source: Beacon Center MIS.

Summary

The number of youth who participate in Beacon activities, who they are (i.e., girls or boys; elementary-, middle- or high-school youth), and the frequency and breadth of their involvement were explored in this chapter. The information gathered speaks to the ability of the Beacon Centers to produce long-term outcomes for youth, parents and schools.

Beacon Centers also reached a large number of adults over the course of a year, ranging from 150 to 764 adults at the different Beacon Centers. Adults constitute approximately 25 percent of the total number of participants in all five centers, and they participate in a variety of activities—from English as a Second Language classes to computer courses to parenting groups. All indications show that the Beacon Centers are reaching academically needy youth and that there is at least a small group of youth who are attending with frequency and regularity at all the centers. Those centers that receive program funding that mandates more frequent attendance by youth also tend to have a larger core group of regular participants.

Most youth participated in only one activity in Fall 1999. As we collect more database information on attendance, we will be able to see whether the patterns change over the course of a year.

In the next chapter, we will examine youth's experiences at the Beacon Centers and how their level of participation differentiates what they get out of attending, primarily in terms of the adult supportiveness they perceive.

Are Youth Receiving High-Quality Developmental Supports and Opportunities Through Their Participation in the Beacon Centers?

The success of the SFBI is predicated on the notion that youth and families will use the services of the Beacon Centers, and that through their use they will receive high-quality supports and opportunities that will enhance their competencies and, in turn, the quality of their lives. The basic assumptions that contribute to this vision are that the Beacon Centers will be attractive to, and well used by, youth and families; that they will provide a range of activities across different core areas; that these activities will be engaging to members of the community; and that the programs will be of sufficient quality and attended with enough consistency that they can be expected to make a difference in the lives of those who participate.

In addition to providing an array of activities to increase Beacon Center participants' productive use of discretionary time, the centers focus on providing programming to youth that fits into a youth development framework. A youth development approach is often described in terms of its contrast with a deficit-reduction approach, which is aimed at fixing an immediate problem with a targeted, short-term intervention. Such short-term interventions to address specific problems may be insufficient in achieving long-term changes (Walker and Vilella-Velez, 1992; Zaslow and Takanishi, 1993). In contrast, the youth development philosophy espouses viewing youth as assets who will respond positively to increased access to positive supports and opportunities for healthy development (Benson, 1990; Connell et al., 2000). Key youth development principles include giving youth input into decisions, providing opportunities for meaningful involvement, engaging youth in challenging activities, and building a range of skills and competencies (Pittman and Wright, 1991; Quinn, 1999). Programs that use a youth development approach strive to provide activities that will help build young people's confidence and competence and serve as positive outlets for their energies. After identifying factors that characterize high-quality youth development programming, this chapter will examine youth's developmental experiences at the Beacon Centers and address three main questions:

- Are youth receiving high-quality supports and opportunities from their participation in Beacon Center activities?
- Where differences exist in who is receiving desired supports and opportunities, how can we explain them?
- Do youth involved in Beacon activities show an increase in their productive use of discretionary time compared with their non-Beacon peers?

What Constitutes High Quality?

Beacon Centers' goals are to use approaches that have been shown to help develop youth in positive ways and reduce their involvement in negative behaviors. The theory of change model for the Beacon Centers at the site level has emphasized the following four critical developmental supports and opportunities:

- Supportive relationships,
- Safe places to spend leisure time,
- Interesting learning experiences, and
- Opportunities for meaningful roles and responsibilities.

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Research studies show that having **supportive adults** in youth's lives who know and care about what young people do and who can provide guidance, emotional support and instrumental assistance is critical to youth's successful navigation of multiple developmental changes and transitions and to their avoidance of high-risk behaviors that limit life options (Eccles et al., 1993; Erikson, 1986; Furstenberg, 1993; Rutter, 1987; Tierney and Grossman, 1995; Werner and Smith, 1982).

Having a **safe place** where youth can engage in activities with other youth and stay off the streets and out of trouble is a growing concern for parents and community members. Thus, an early goal of the Beacon Centers has been to provide safe places for youth and adults, so that they can turn their attention to learning and interacting with others. Indeed, research has found that when young people are given safe places and healthy activities in which to participate during critical gap periods, they are less likely to have time to participate in the high-risk, unhealthy activities that can delay or derail positive development (Panel on High-Risk Youth, 1993; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Medrich, 1991).

Giving youth the opportunity to engage in their choice of a variety of **interesting and novel learning activities** complements young people's need to fashion an expanded sense of competence (Epstein, 1988; Eccles, 1999). Research has found that young people are more likely to participate in activities that are attractive to them given their ages and interests, that are easily accessible and affordable, and that involve peers whom they value (Hultsman, 1992; Medrich, 1991); consequently, they are less likely to get involved in vandalism, drug use and other high-risk behaviors (Schinke et al., 1992).

Youth in general and teens in particular benefit from **opportunities to engage in meaningful activities and to take on meaningful responsibilities** (Eccles and Barber, 1999). Taking on leadership roles is one way that youth can participate in a meaningful way; having a voice in how activities are structured and run is another. Providing youth with these types of opportunities allows them to practice roles and build competencies relevant to future jobs and careers (Scales, 1991). Further, as youth take on leadership responsibilities, they learn to take others into account and develop a greater sense of responsibility (Conrad and Hedin, 1982). Beacon Centers provide an ideal context in which youth can test out these roles and responsibilities with the support and guidance of Beacon staff.

In the school setting, there is evidence that environments that support youth's involvement in decision-making are more engaging for youth, particularly as they enter middle school (Midgley et al., 1988). Correlated evidence also suggests that when youth have teachers who support a focus on individual improvement, recognize youth for their successes and develop activities that lend themselves to this type of classroom environment, the youth are more engaged, feel a stronger sense of belonging in the classroom and school, and use higher-level problem-solving strategies than do youth in classes where teachers do not do these things (Anderman and Maehr, 1994). Similarly, evidence from studies of sports shows a relationship between coaches who take a mastery-oriented approach and players' increased skill development (Roberts and Treasure, 1992; Roberts et al., 1997). Another study shows a link between involvement in extracurricular activities and positive changes in grade-point average between grades 10 and 12, although the study did not take into account the quality of the activities in which youth engaged (Eccles and Barber, 1999).

In order to examine the developmental experiences of the youth and the qualities of the activities, we conducted surveys of youth in three middle schools and observed a sample of activities at all five Beacon Centers. The following list and sample questions provide examples of how we measured youth's perceptions of the developmental experiences afforded them by the Beacon Centers:

> **Supportive Adults.** We asked youth to indicate the *number* of adults at the Beacon Center (including staff, security personnel and volunteers) who provide different types of support to them—for example, who pay attention to what is going on in their life or say something nice to them when they do something good, or to whom they could go if they were upset or mad or if they needed advice about personal problems. These items were highly correlated and were used to form a "supportive adults" construct.

Table 6.1
Proportion of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Youth Reporting Beacon Center Supports and Opportunities, Fall 1999

	Valley	Meadow	Summit
	N=82	N=270	N=110
Percentage of Beacon Center participants from the host school who:			
Report there are one or more *supportive adults* at the Beacon Center	67%	44%	73%
Report the Beacon Center is a *safe* place to be after school	89	87	89
Report the Beacon Center provides *variety and choice*	73	71	77
Agree that the Beacon Center provides all three of the above	54	35	57

Source: Middle school youth survey, Fall 1999.

Safety. We asked youth to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that the Beacon Center "is a safe place to be after school."

Variety and Choice. Youth responded to questions about their perception that the Beacon Center "gives students a lot of choices about what they can do and how they can do it" and offers "a lot of interesting activities to choose from."

Leadership. Youth were asked how often in the last year they had engaged in 10 different types of activities: three considered formal (e.g., trained or supervised other youth or council member); four considered informal (e.g., helped to plan activities or events or helped to set rules or procedures for a group they are involved in); and three considered representational (e.g., gave a presentation to a group or acted as a representative of a group at an event or meeting).

Responses on the first three topics from surveys completed in Fall 1999 by sixth- and seventh-grade students who go to the host schools and report having gone to the Beacon Centers are summarized in Table 6.1. Information on involvement in leadership opportunities of both Beacon and non-Beacon youth is summarized in Table 6.3.

Although youth were asked in the surveys about the Beacon Center as a whole, in Spring 2000, observers also examined and rated specific Beacon activities along similar dimensions of quality. In particular, as noted in Chapter IV, observers rated adult responsiveness. Other dimensions that correspond to youth's areas of reporting are youth engagement and opportunities for decision-making and leadership. Descriptive information about the number of activities observed, the number of youth involved, whether or not the activities were drop-in, the staff-to-youth ratios and the number of teen leaders engaged is summarized in Table 6.2.

Supportive Relationships with Beacon Staff

Given that supportive relationships are a goal of the Beacon Centers, the proportion of youth who indicate that there are no supportive adults at the centers (including staff, security personnel and volunteers) appears higher than expected. The proportion of youth who agreed there was at least one adult at the Beacon Center on whom they could rely for support ranged from 44 percent to 73 percent which indicates that 27 percent to 56 percent found *no* adults at the Beacon Center who met their needs for support. In contrast, when we included adults at the school (teachers, counselors, coaches or others but not adults at the Beacon Center), the proportion of Beacon youth at each school who agreed there was at least one supportive adult was much greater, ranging from 86 percent to 90 percent. Additionally, in a national study of

Table 6.2
Staff-to-Youth Ratios in Sample of Observed Activities, Spring 2000

Characteristics	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
Number of activities observed	6*	9*	4	9*	6
Range of average class size observed	3 to 24	4 to 25	4 to 20	6 to 15	4 to 37
Range of observed staff-to-youth ratios	1:3 to 1:12	1:3 to 1:8	1:2 to 1:7	1:3 to 1:11	1:2 to 1:7
Proportion 1:3 or less	17%	44%	50%	11%	33%
Proportion 1:4 to 1:9	50%	56%	50%	78%	67%
Proportion 1:10 to 1:12	33%	0%	0%	11%	0%
Number of activities observed that use teen leaders	1	4	3	0	2
Number of activities identified as "drop-in"	0	0	0	0	4

*Does not include one activity that was canceled at Eastern, one activity that was canceled at Valley and two activities that were canceled at Meadow. Drop-in activities—such as the drop-in teen center at Ocean—are offered but were not observed.
Source: Summary scores from three observations per activity conducted by PIPV staff during the Fall/Spring 1999-2000 activity sessions.

Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA branches, and Girls Incorporated centers, the proportion of youth reporting at least one supportive adult was 73 percent, 58 percent and 78 percent, respectively. At the Meadow Beacon Center, where 56 percent of the youth did not identify even one Beacon adult who they felt provided support (representing a significant difference from the other two Beacon Centers), we noted a number of factors that may contribute to this finding. For example, the sheer size of the school and the large population of youth who attend the Beacon Center may detract from the center's ability to promote adult-youth interactions that would lead to youth believing that an adult could be a support for them. The structure of the activities, which are typically held in eight-week sessions, may also limit relationship building between adults and youth. Youth may move from activity to activity every eight weeks (which we will be able to explore in greater detail in future research) and never have the opportunity to build relationships with adults. Additionally, the Meadow Beacon Center does not have dedicated space, so youth are less likely to hang around Beacon staff and talk informally (as is the case at the other centers), although the safety and support personnel do make efforts to engage the youth in the hallways.

Although Valley and Summit are not meeting daily-attendance goals and are serving fewer youth than expected, a greater proportion of the youth who attend these two centers report that there are adults to whom they can turn for support. Valley differs from the other two centers in that more of its activities tend to have low staff-to-youth ratios, which are generally more conducive to promoting positive interaction. Valley is also more likely to use teen leaders to enhance its activity staffing, which may provide youth with someone closer in age to whom they feel they can talk. Summit also tends to maintain relatively low staff-to-youth ratios in its activities, using multiple staff in its larger activities and teen staff in some cases. For example, Summit's open-recreation activity averaged five adult members and one teen staff member to 37 youth over the three times observers watched the activity. We also noted that four of the six activities we observed at Summit were regularly scheduled activities but allowed youth to drop in. Although unstructured drop-in activities are difficult to plan for and do not lend themselves as easily to follow-through by youth (e.g., to build a specific competence), they may be more likely to facilitate naturally developing relationships between staff and youth over an extended period.

On the other hand, because the Meadow Beacon Center is serving a large number of youth, the absolute number who report receiving adult support (N=119) is greater than at either Summit (N=80) or Valley (N=55).

Table 6.3
Mean Number of Leadership Roles Engaged in (Overall and by Type) by Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Youth by Beacon Status, Fall 1999

Characteristics	Valley		Meadow		Summit	
	Beacon	Non-Beacon	Beacon	Non-Beacon	Beacon	Non-Beacon
	N=82	N=110	N=270	N=427	N=110	N=71
Overall number of leadership roles (10 were possible)	6.0*	4.6	5.8**	5.2	6.2***	4.3
Number of **formal** leadership roles (3 were possible)	1.5*	1.0	1.2**	1.0	1.3*	0.9
Number of **informal** leadership roles (4 were possible)	2.6+	2.2	2.5+	2.3	2.9***	2.0
Number of **representational** leadership roles (3 were possible)	1.9+	1.6	2.0+	1.9	2.1***	1.5

*p<.01
**p<.05
***p<.001
+p<.10
Source: Middle school youth survey, Fall 1999.

Safe Places

As noted in Chapter IV, almost all the Beacon participants surveyed (87% to 89%) agreed that the Beacon Centers are a safe place to be after school. Also noted in Chapter IV, the high proportion of youth who view the Beacon Centers as safe is commendable, especially given that the centers are located in large urban schools in low-income communities—in which youth have generally not felt safe.

Interesting Learning Experiences/Variety and Choice

The Beacon Centers appear to excel in the variety and choice they offer youth. Information we gathered from surveys and discussions with youth confirmed their belief that the activities are diverse, interesting and fun. As one youth described:

> *I decided to join [Urban Music] because I thought it was something interesting, something you never tried before, it catches your attention. So I thought, music, and we've gone on three trips. The last one was this place, Amoeba Records, and we got to DJ and put music on and all the girls and guys were putting their music on and we had all kinds of music.*

Another youth commented:

> *If you're not interested in one thing [at the center], they're sure to have something else.*

In accordance with what we heard from youth in group discussions, approximately three-quarters of the Beacon participants surveyed at all three middle-school centers agreed that the activity options provide choice, variety and interest to them. The agreement among youth about the variety and interest of the Beacon activities is not surprising. The youth's favorable opinions reflect the large range of activities offered, the novelty of many of the offerings and the attention of the youth development coordinators to the youth's interests.

Observers' comments and ratings of the level of youth and staff enthusiasm and engagement in specific activities corroborate the youth's positive reports of interest, variety and choice.

Meaningful Roles and Responsibilities

According to the surveys, Beacon Center youth tended to engage in a range of formal, informal and representation-type leadership activities. On this particular measure, we also asked non-Beacon youth about their experiences and found that they reported engaging in fewer leadership roles than their Beacon peers. Table 6.3 displays mean-level differences between Beacon youth and non-Beacon youth in the type and frequency of leadership roles they have engaged in over the last year. The differences are significant at all three schools for the three types of leadership roles and for the overall number of leadership roles. Although we did not ask the youth whether those leadership roles were located at the Beacon Center, we suspect that most of the differences are attributable to the centers' provision of opportunities for youth to provide input, help out with other youth, take on leadership positions and represent the Beacon Centers at events and meetings held in the community. As noted earlier, a number of programs implemented at the centers (e.g., Student Leaders against Sexual Harassment, Changemakers, Our Schools, Our Media, Youth Councils) place a specific emphasis on developing leadership skills and engaging in leadership roles.

Our observations of the opportunities for decision-making and leadership within specific activities indicate relatively low levels of opportunity for youth involvement, with the important exception of the activities noted above, which have been designed specifically to build leadership skills. In those particular programs, youth were observed creating their own agendas for ongoing activities and action within their school or community. In other programs, in contrast, instructors were more likely to come into the sessions with prescribed plans and to carry them out with some, but more minimal, input or involvement from the youth. That Beacon Center youth report higher levels of leadership opportunity than do their peers, however, indicates that even minor ways of involving youth can contribute to the youth's sense of leadership and involvement and that the Beacon Centers as a whole, not necessarily their specific activities, may be providing these types of leadership opportunities.

How Do Beacon Youth Spend Their Out-of-School Time?

Several studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought attention to the amount of discretionary time youth have in their out-of-school hours and the risks (for engaging in delinquent behaviors) and opportunities (for engaging in multifaceted extracurricular and enrichment activities) this leisure time has the potential to produce (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992). Using leisure time in productive ways—for example, by getting involved in extracurricular activities—has been shown to be related to positive increases in grade-point average and school engagement, particularly when the activities include leadership roles (Eccles and Barber, 1999). In contrast, youth who do not engage in positive extracurricular activities feel less attached to school and community and are more likely to drop out of school (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995) and get into trouble (Mahoney, 1997). As a result of concerns that youth do not have access to high-quality, challenging activities in which to spend their leisure time, the SFBI has aimed to develop an array of productive activities that will attract youth in their out-of-school time.

We cannot yet determine whether youth who participate in Beacon Center programs are more productively engaged in activities in their out-of-school time than they were before they began to participate; that question remains for the ongoing research. We can, however, examine how youth spend their out-of-school time and compare whether Beacon Center participants spend that time in ways that are different from youth who do not attend the Beacon Centers (but may attend other programs).

The youth surveys provide evidence that youth who participate in Beacon programs spend their time in ways very similar to those of nonparticipants. In comparing a group of middle-school youth who attend Beacon Centers with those who do not, we found a number of similarities but also a few small but statistically significant differences. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 6.4. Youth, both those who participate in the Beacon Centers and those who do not, spend the greatest proportion of their discretionary time watching TV (on average, one-third of their time). Beacon youth do, however,

Table 6.4
Percentage of Out-of-School Time Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Youth Report Spending In Different Activities by Beacon Status, Fall 1999

Type of Activity	Youth Who Participate in Beacon Centers	Non-Beacon Participants
Out-of-school activity	N=382	N=500
Watching television (including videos)	32%*	34%
Homework or studying	19%	19%
Hanging out with friends (talking, playing games, going to the mall)	18%	19%
Reading other than schoolwork	8%	10%
Art, music, dance or drama class or lesson	6%*	5%
Organized sports (class or team, after school or weekends)	5%	4%
After-school tutoring	4%*	1%
Parties, dances or trips planned by community programs or centers	3%*	2%
Religious activities	3%	4%
Community service or volunteer work	2%	2%
Average total amount of time reported spent across all activities combined over a one-week period	63 hours, 57 minutes	59 hours, 49 minutes

*p<.05
Note: These activity categories were predesignated for youth. Youth were asked to indicate the number of minutes spent in each activity each day of the week.
Source: Middle school youth survey, Fall 1999.

spend approximately 2.5 hours more each week engaged in art, organized sports, after-school tutoring and community events than non-Beacon youth.

The findings hold true for youth reports in Fall 1998 and Fall 1999, with one exception: In Fall 1998, youth who did not participate in Beacon Center activities reported spending a greater proportion of their time doing homework than the Beacon youth. By Fall 1999, however, no differences were reported between the two groups. Between 1998 and 1999, a number of Beacon Centers received California state funds for after-school learning programs, which may account for the Beacon youth's increased comparability to their non-Beacon peers as of Fall 1999.

Summary

The Beacon Centers aim to provide much more than just a holding place for youth and families and to engage youth in meaningful, high-quality activities that will provide the supports and opportunities that are likely to have a significant impact on their positive growth. Engaging youth in interesting activities, with supportive adults in places where they feel safe, and offering them opportunities for leadership, involvement and decision-making are identified as important intermediate steps likely to lead to positive longer-term outcomes.

Overall, we find that the Beacon Centers are promoting a feeling of safety among attendees and providing a variety of interesting learning experiences for a majority of youth. Not as many youth who attend the Beacon Centers report access to supportive adults in the Beacon Centers. Thus, one area in which the Beacon Centers show room for improvement is in the quality of the adult support provided to youth who attend.

In the area of leadership opportunities, we compared Beacon participants with their middle- school peers who do not attend Beacon Centers and found that youth who attend are more likely than their non-Beacon peers to engage in leadership activities that provide them with the opportunity to take on meaningful roles and responsibilities.

The mechanisms for establishing and supporting the youth's developmental experiences and sustaining the initiative are described in the next chapters.

Provider Partnerships: Efforts and Challenges

In the previous chapters, we have shown that the Beacon Centers are achieving their goal of becoming visible, accessible, safe and welcoming. They are also providing a variety of interesting learning experiences and opportunities for meaningful involvement. The centers' achievements have required work in multiple areas, as reflected in the initiative's theory of change. Previous chapters have examined steps that staff at the Beacon Centers have undertaken to provide a range of activities, ensure that youth feel safe and recruit youth. By design, much of the work carried out in the Beacon Centers, however, depends on a range of partnerships with agencies and individuals who provide many of the activities. Building partnerships with provider agencies is presumed to bring several benefits to the Beacon Centers. First, it may enhance the range and number of activities the centers can offer. Second, partner agencies may contribute in-kind resources to the centers. Both benefits enhance the centers' capacity to serve more youth with more services. In addition, if collaborating agencies did not have a prior presence in the local neighborhood, the partnership not only does enhance the Beacon Center, it also brings new resources into the community.

Partners can be divided into two categories: funders and providers. These are not mutually exclusive categories, since providers sometimes bring their own funds to the initiative. In general, however, we consider funder partnerships to be those with organizations that provide funds but not staff. Partnerships with agencies that provide staff, whether or not they provide funds, are considered provider partnerships. We make this distinction primarily because the process of forging the relationships is somewhat different between the two. Partnerships with funders are discussed in Chapter IX. In this chapter, we focus our discussion on partnerships with providers.

This chapter addresses four questions:

- How have the Beacon Centers developed partnerships with provider agencies?
- How many partners do the centers have, and how many youth are served by provider agencies?
- What challenges do partnerships present?
- Given the multiple providers involved, how do the Beacon staff communicate with partner agencies?

How Partnerships Were Formed

In the theory of change, each level of the initiative—site, intermediary and initiative—is given some responsibility for partnership formation. The centers are responsible for leveraging community resources and for putting in place programs that support long-term outcomes, which they often do by recruiting local organizations to provide services and activities at the centers. The intermediary is charged with facilitating negotiations with both public and non-profit youth-serving institutions for the commitment of resources to the Beacon Centers. At the initiative level, the steering committee is responsible for forging more diverse and deeper partnerships between youth-serving institutions—particularly public institutions—and the initiative.

Developing partnerships with providers happens in a number of ways. In some cases, community agencies involved in planning the Beacon Centers have become provider partners. Cross-site sharing among Beacon directors is another way partners are identified. The intermediary, with extensive contacts with youth development organizations throughout the Bay Area, has introduced centers to organizations,

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resulting in new partnerships. A few directors reported that agencies have contacted them to see whether they can provide activities in the Beacon Centers. The rest of this section details the ways in which partnerships with agencies are formed, the challenges to forming partnerships, and how local conditions facilitate or impede the development of the partnerships.[7]

Founding Members of the Beacons' Collaborative Become Partners

In two of the five sites, the Beacon Center grew out of a collaboration of agencies and people who wanted the center in the community. In both centers, founding member agencies went on to provide activities for the center. For example, in Eastern's community, Community Educational Services has provided English literacy, tutoring and an introduction to American culture to recent teen immigrants at the Eastern Beacon Center. In addition, a second founding-member agency, the YMCA, provides a summer camp to Eastern Beacon participants. In the Meadow Beacon Center, a local youth-serving agency was an important founding partner for the center (the current Beacon director helped start the agency), and the center continues its collaboration with the organization. The agency provides services that are targeted toward high-risk youth, thereby complementing the youth development work of the Beacon Center, which targets all youth in the community.

Introductions to Activities by the Intermediary

Every month, the intermediary organizes a Beacon directors' meeting. During the meetings, intermediary staff introduce Beacon staff to nonprofit providers, public agencies and staff from agencies in the Bay Area who may provide interesting opportunities for the Beacon Centers. The intermediary also convenes occasional meetings to introduce stakeholders to the centers in the hope of creating partnerships. At one Beacon directors' meeting, for example, staff from San Francisco's Promise gave a presentation to the directors and invited proposals from the centers. This was the second time the directors had been invited to submit proposals; with the previous invitation, two Beacon Centers—Eastern and Meadow—applied to the organization for funding and opportunities.

The intermediary also introduced the Meadow Beacon Center to Civic Ventures, a national organization that creates opportunities for older adults to serve youth in their communities.[8] Civic Ventures' Experience Corps provides volunteers who are 55 and older to the center where they tutor and mentor individual children. Staff at the Meadow Beacon Center worked collaboratively with Civic Ventures to get funding to expand the program to the other Beacon Centers.

Cross-Site Sharing

Increasingly, Beacon directors' meetings that are convened every month by the intermediary have proved to be a good way for the directors to share information about their programs, including data about strong providers and programs. Occasional visits to other sites, also scheduled and organized by the intermediary, are good ways for directors to observe activities that they may wish to replicate at their sites. Cross-site sharing led Eastern to contact Back On Track, an organization that provides one-on-one tutoring services for youth. In addition, the Women's Safety Project runs girls' self-defense classes in three Beacon Centers: Ocean, Summit and Meadow. The director of one of the centers reported that he contacted the organization after seeing a class being run at another center.

The Advantages and Challenges of Collaboration

Every Beacon Center has a range of productive partnerships with agencies. Without them, the centers would lack their characteristic richness of activities. Partnerships generally function well across the sites: Many are of long duration and serve many youth. From July 1 to December 31, 1999, the number of agencies that provided activities to children, youth and adults ranged from seven in the Eastern Beacon Center to 14 in the Summit Beacon Center. Across the five centers, providers served 17 percent to 90 percent of the participants. Eighty-one to 435 youth in each center went to activities that were partially or wholly provided by outside partners. The diversity of services is also increased through the collaborations with providers, who bring a wide range of activities into the centers.

In addition to partnerships with agencies that provide activities, every center has a partnership with BAYAC, which provides AmeriCorps volunteers to the Beacon Centers, thereby increasing the centers' staff capacity to sponsor youth activities. In one center, a local agency provides support services, such as transportation, to youth with special needs, thereby enabling the center to serve a group of youth it had not previously been able to reach as well as increasing its accessibility.

Partnerships with collaborating agencies have thus provided real benefits to the Beacon Centers by increasing the number of youth the centers can serve and by increasing the range of services provided. However, such collaborations can be challenging, since they require extensive communication and coordination. Below, we discuss the challenges to forging partnerships and how the sites have responded to them.

The Availability of Partners

One challenge that two centers in particular have faced is the availability of suitable partners, and it explains, to some degree, the low number of partners that provide activities at those centers. The two centers with the lowest number of partnerships, 7 and 10, discussed the challenge of finding suitable partners. Both centers are in communities with limited resources for local youth development, a limitation that initially drove the local efforts to open the Beacon Centers.

The community surrounding the Eastern Beacon Center has a range of agencies, but they target either very young children and their families or high-risk youth. Few local agencies provide youth development services. The director has therefore had to look outside the community for partners.

The area around the other Beacon Center, Meadow, which has 10 local partners, has traditionally offered few social services of any type. The Meadow Beacon Center, which has a director who is particularly skilled in forging collaborations across a broad range of agencies and stakeholders, has addressed the center's challenge in two ways. First, the center has gone to agencies in other parts of the city to find providers. Second, the center subcontracts with a larger number of community residents than other centers to provide activities.

Communication with Multiple Providers

Communication among providers is central to the centers' ability to plan, schedule and coordinate different activities. Almost all providers, however, spend little time—apart from their scheduled activity sessions—at the Beacon Centers, making it hard for them to engage in informal interaction. Given the number of collaborating agencies, one potential challenge to running a successful Beacon Center is ensuring adequate communication between diverse, often absent providers. In reality, though, only a small number of Beacon and collaborating agency staff identified communication as an ongoing challenge. One provider, for example, said he knew his organization was part of a whole but that he did not feel adequately informed about what that whole was doing. Several Beacon staff mentioned that it was difficult to keep providers informed about activities and expectations for future events at the centers.

Most of the providers and center staff with whom we spoke, however, either did not identify communication as a challenge or explicitly noted that the communication among them was good. Centers used a variety of strategies to ensure communication, and their diverse efforts paid off. One center required that all provider agencies attend weekly meetings to participate in the center. Two other centers each had bimonthly or monthly meetings for their collaborating agencies. A fourth center did not hold such meetings, but many of its providers served on the center's community council, which offered time and space for sharing information. The fifth center held only one orientation meeting at the beginning of each session (in the Fall and summer), but it had a large office space that provider agencies could use, which offered opportunities for communication. Each center, therefore, had devised its own strategies for communicating with its outsider providers.

The Challenge of Quality

In contrast to communication, Beacon directors and other coordinating staff reported that ensuring the quality of activities across a wide range of providers was often difficult. The challenge was twofold: The centers had to determine how to assess activities appropriately as well as how to improve or eliminate those activities that proved inadequate.

At this point in the initiative, the Beacon Centers have not yet established how to systematically assess the quality of activities or to encourage improvements. Instead, they have tended to address the challenge of poor activities by not renewing contracts with agencies with which they are dissatisfied. As several staff noted, the Beacon Centers have limited authority in getting subcontracting agencies to address programmatic weaknesses.

Of course, the SFBI is experiencing ongoing development. One key assessment of the initiative's outcomes is the extent to which activities support the development of youth competencies in the five core areas. To determine the activities' success in doing so, the intermediary has recently initiated activity-specific assessments involving providers, intermediary staff, consultants and Beacon staff. Beacon directors see the process as an opportunity for them to assess activities that are implemented both by the centers and by partner agency staff.

Challenges for Providers

The collaborators also face challenges. Over the years, we have spoken with staff from agencies that provide a range of activities to the Beacon Centers. Although not a comprehensive survey of all the partnerships, the interviews have supplied insight into what it is like to set agency activities in the context of a Beacon Center. A handful of providers mentioned that they must adhere both to policies set by the centers and to those set by the host schools. One collaborator reported, "Staff work here [at the Beacon] very well as a team, and they want and expect us to be part of the team, and yet we don't spend enough time to want to be part of the team." Another collaborator noted that during transitions of Beacon staff communication was sometimes difficult and that it had taken time to orient new Beacon staff to previously negotiated relationships but that these were not long-lasting issues. A third collaborator remarked that it had been difficult in previous years to get access to the school to run the program but that communications with the school and the subcontractor had improved and things were now running smoothly.

One provider, whose agency organizes activities at all but one Beacon Center, mentioned a challenge that may become more salient to the initiative as the centers begin to share information among themselves about agencies that provide good activities for youth, resulting in more agencies that serve multiple centers. His staff have found that, because each Beacon Center operates differently from the others, multiple communication strategies are required. In other words, a single agency that serves multiple centers is not serving one institution that has multiple sites. Instead, it is serving multiple institutions that have distinctly different operating procedures. Staff from the provider agencies must understand the differences among the centers and tailor their communications to each center.

Summary

The Beacon Centers have been successful in recruiting a broad range of agencies that provide activities to a large number of youth. Efforts to identify and recruit providers have been jointly undertaken by the intermediary and the Beacon Centers. The intermediary has provided introductions to agencies during Beacon directors' meetings, and center staff have followed up to bring the agencies into their centers. In addition, the intermediary's meetings with the Beacon directors have served as a forum for the directors to share information about strong programs at their centers, resulting in the spread of specific activities across centers.

Although both Beacon Center and provider agency staff mentioned challenges to the collaborations, strategies were in place to address some of them. A fundamental challenge for two centers was the lack of availability of local agencies providing youth development activities. The relative dearth of providers has limited the number of partnership programs at the centers, but staff at both have worked to compensate. The other centers are located in communities that have more services available.

Communication among providers and the centers has been successfully addressed in a different way by each center. Three centers hold regular meetings—weekly, biweekly and monthly—that providers are expected to attend. One center includes many of its providers in its community council, which fosters the sharing of information. A fifth center holds only one orientation meeting for providers at the beginning of the school year or summer session but has dedicated office space in the school that is large enough to accommodate providers who need to do

some pre- or post-activity office work. The space enables frequent communication between Beacon and provider agency staff.

One challenge that has not yet been addressed systematically is ensuring the quality of the activities. Coordinating staff at the Beacon Centers observe activities and monitor attendance, but they do so informally. In the rare cases where staff judge activities as poor, they discontinue contracts with the providers after the session ends. At this point in the initiative, the centers are working to devise systematic strategies for assessing the extent to which the activities meet their stated goals.

Partnerships With the Schools

As we noted in Chapter III, the SFBI met one of its early, initiative-level outcomes when it fostered the support of key community leaders, including the superintendent, and created a partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District, the city and private funders. Those first steps laid the groundwork with the SFUSD. This chapter examines the development of that collaboration, which has been crucial to institutionalizing Beacon Centers in San Francisco.

From the SFBI's earliest days, key decision-makers in the initiative expected that the SFUSD would play an integral role in the development of the Beacon Centers. The schools—particularly middle and high schools—are located in neighborhoods where such facilities as auditoriums, gymnasiums, athletic fields and other community spaces are in short supply. Schools therefore offer important physical facilities to communities. They also offer ready access to the youth who attend them and to other community members.

The initiative stakeholders also perceived potential benefits for the schools. Community involvement in the non-school hours may ultimately increase community interest and involvement in what happens during the school day. Parental involvement, in particular, is both crucial and challenging for many schools across the country to foster, and the planners of the SFBI hoped that the Beacon Centers would enhance the schools' efforts in this area.

For all these reasons, the theory of change emphasized the schools' importance to the undertaking when it assumed that strong partnerships between the centers and the schools would increase program integration and school-community interaction and result in a shared sense of purpose between the Beacon Centers and the schools. The planners also knew that such partnerships had proved challenging in other cities and hoped that they could prevent and overcome anticipated setbacks by assigning responsibility for the developing school partnerships to many people. Beacon Center and school-day staff were responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of relationships. The intermediary was responsible for facilitating relationship building at both the school and the initiative level. Steering committee members were responsible for providing necessary resources to both the Beacon Centers and the schools to enable successful implementation of the centers.

This chapter explores the challenges and development of partnerships with the schools—at the school sites themselves and with the district's administration. In particular, it asks the following questions:

- What were the terms of agreement between the schools and the initiative?
- What is the role of the school district's central administration in the initiative?
- What common challenges do the Beacon Centers face in working in school settings?
- How have the centers and the initiative addressed the challenges?

The chapter ends with discussion of the initiative's progress toward outcomes related to the partnerships with the schools.

The School District's Contributions to the Initiative

In 1996, the steering committee drafted a document that set forth the roles and responsibilities of each institutional partner. The school district made four commitments: (1) to provide in-kind school-site facilities, utilities and other space-related costs; (2) to provide a half-time Beacon site liaison at each site to offer operational support and strengthen the partnership between the center and the school; (3) to channel the SFUSD resources and coordinate school funding opportunities for Beacon sites; and (4) to designate an assistant principal at each site to help support that Beacon Center. In addition, the district offered to work with the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families to develop new strategies and policies for meeting the Beacon Centers' security and custodial needs, help school staff and administrators develop greater skills in collaborating with the centers, assist school sites in integrating services and using existing resources optimally in support of the centers, and provide hardware and software so Beacon schools could access the SFUSD's community mapping database.[9]

The contributions that the school district made to the initiative were significant. The host schools were expected to share space with the Beacon Center at no cost to the center. Those expectations have been met: Schools have shared their space after school, in the evenings, on Saturdays and during the summer. In addition, three schools in the evaluation sites have provided their Beacon Centers with large spaces to use for programs and office space and as a safe place for youth to "hang."[10]

In addition to observing the drafted agreement that lays out general responsibilities, the schools entered into some more specific verbal agreements with the initiative. The challenge of providing custodial support was anticipated by an agreement that such support (cleaning and providing paper products) for Beacon activities would be provided at no cost to the initiative (until 10 p.m. in the secondary schools) on days that school was in session. In addition, the SFUSD provided an allowance of up to $15,000 per Beacon school site for custodial overtime for the hours Beacon activities met when custodians were not on duty.

The agreements, both verbal and written, have provided important benefits to the Beacon Centers, but working in the schools has still proved challenging. Agreements must be supported by people at all levels of the initiative, and turnover of key staff in centers, in the schools and in other areas of the initiative has meant that new relationships must be built regularly. The context within which the schools operate has changed somewhat, which has affected whether and how some agreements can be honored. For example, a deepening financial crisis put strain on the district's ability to find funds for services. The pressure to increase test scores—which is being experienced by schools across the nation—has also affected how the schools hope to use available funds.

All maturing initiatives are subject to strains as conditions change and new levels of development are reached. The challenges the San Francisco initiative faces are not unique; all community-school initiatives face them, and all have important implications for the ability of a Beacon Center to carry out its mission (Walker et al., 2000).

Working With the School District's Central Administration

Although the development of effective partnerships rests heavily with the Beacon and school staff at the site itself, the initiative's theory of change assumes that it is necessary for the intermediary, the city, private funders and the school-district administration to support the effort and intervene when necessary. The school district's central administration has been involved with the initiative since its inception and has striven to institute agreements that support work at the school sites.

Early in the planning process, several factors drove the decision to bring the school district on board as a key partner. First, the city and private funders noted that it was important that the district be included, since the centers are located in schools. Second, they hoped that the SFUSD would help identify and capture resources for the initiative, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Third, planning partners recognized that creating sustainable Beacon Centers would be challenging and would require not only funding and

space but also long-term accommodations from key institutions, including the schools. Finally, the SFBI hoped that the Beacon Centers would be integrated into the school community and not just be community centers operating in the schools. Engaging the school district has ensured that the goal of integration is still possible.

The engagement of the school district's administration has been crucial to the development of a multi-site initiative, but it has not been without challenges. On the positive side are the school-district administrators on the steering committee who have helped the other committee members and intermediary staff understand the complex culture and structure of the school district. With that knowledge, the steering committee has become much more sensitive to who needs to be contacted within the district. The school district, which is in tight financial straits, has also provided limited funding to the initiative beyond the substantial contribution of school space. It has provided overtime pay for custodians and Title 11 funds for Beacon liaisons. In addition, over the years, staff from the district's central office have contributed a substantial amount of time to working with the initiative.

In a number of instances, however, the initiative has not met the ambitious goals it set for itself in working with the school district. Below, we discuss two needs that initiative stakeholders have identified as important: agreed-upon custodial services and a Beacon-school memorandum of understanding. We first discuss the rationale for identifying these needs and note the current status of the effort. None of the work that has been done in these areas has produced the desired results, and the second part of the discussion explores why it has been so difficult.

Developing a Memorandum of Understanding

In an issue related to custodial services, the initiative has tried to put in place a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the host schools and the Beacon Centers. An MOU would constitute a significant systems accommodation and give the Beacon Centers and schools a firm base from which to negotiate. Beacon directors from schools in which the Beacon-school relationship is strained hope that an MOU will provide clear expectations about Beacon-school roles and responsibilities and make the centers less vulnerable to the actions of school administrators who do not want the centers in their schools. They hope that an MOU will specify how and when the Beacon Centers can use school space, the particular spaces available and the custodial arrangements. Initiative stakeholders, too, would like to see an MOU in place. Relying on verbal agreements has proved challenging.

Since the beginning of the initiative, only two Beacon Centers have had a signed MOU, both of which have since expired. Since 1998, partners within the school district, at some centers, within the steering committee and at the intermediary have worked to develop a master MOU that will apply to all sites. Several drafts have been passed back and forth between the intermediary and the school district's administration, and a final version is close to being approved.

Developing the MOU has been challenging for a number of reasons. First, even under the best circumstances, a multi-site MOU would require significant review from a large number of people, including school-district administrators, SFUSD counsel, the school board, Beacon steering committee members and current Beacon Centers. Second, over the years, school-district staff holding several different roles have served on the Beacon steering committee and have been given the responsibility of ushering an MOU through the system. Steering committee members have included special assistants to the superintendent, the director of community and business development, the associate superintendent of middle-school instruction and the associate superintendent of student-support services. New steering committee members must pick up where previous members left off, which has required orientation and time. Third, the intermediary, which supports the work of the steering committee, has also experienced staff turnover. Although the turnover has occurred among staff who have not been directly responsible for providing support to the steering committee, those who are responsible for such support must occasionally redirect their attention to covering other areas of work.

Strategies for Strengthening Ties with the School District

To overcome the challenges the initiative faces in working with the school district, several strategies have been developed to increase the district's commitment to the initiative. Intermediary staff have taken responsibility for providing orientations to new steering committee members and other key school-district staff, during which the goals and structure of the initiative are presented.

Intermediary staff also convene occasional meetings with school-district staff to fill them in on the initiative. They have, for example, met with Beacon Center staff and custodial supervisors to discuss cleaning and maintenance schedules. Finally, they play a key role as conduits of information. The intermediary often is the main point of contact between the Beacon Centers and the steering committee. It convenes twice-monthly meetings with the Beacon directors, during which shared challenges in working with the schools are discussed.

The intermediary and steering committee have also identified several people within the school district who, although they may not sit on the committee, are key to working with the district. Over time, more and more people in the school district's administration have come into contact with the initiative. A principal-on-special-assignment working in the Division of Middle School Instruction has played a key role in contacting staff from the facilities department. School Health Programs Department staff have been included in meetings to devise strategies for easing tensions that have arisen between some of the Beacon and school-day staff over district-funded after-school programs. Having multiple contacts is useful in building support for the initiative within the school district. In addition, because the district's administration is a highly differentiated organization with several divisions and departments, each of which operates semi-autonomously from the others, multiple ties improve communication.

Last, a recent innovation has been the development of a staff position, an expanded learning coordinator, paid jointly by the city and the school district. Although the specific parameters of the position are still being developed, it was funded to build stronger ties between the SFUSD and the DCYF to better serve youth in San Francisco. In carrying out her job, the incumbent has perceived a need for each partner to better understand the other, and thus part of her responsibility will be to explain internal bureaucratic processes and other aspects of the organizations. Although it is too soon to determine the effectiveness of this approach, it does promise to serve a need that many school-district personnel have noted over the years: Outsiders do not understand the culture of the school district or the constraints under which school administrators operate.

Establishing Good Beacon-School Relationships: The Work at The Schools

The school district's administration has been a key player in the establishment of multiple Beacon Centers. Without its support, the success of the Beacon Centers would rest heavily on specific relationships at the schools. Even with its support, the work done at the site level between Beacon and school-day staff is crucial in shaping the centers' development.

Each Beacon Center has developed a unique relationship with its host school. Across the centers, the quality of the relationships has varied as personnel and circumstances at both the schools and the centers have changed. As of Spring 2000, Beacon-school relationships ranged from a strong collaboration in which after-school programming in both academic and non-academic activities is a shared undertaking to an uncomfortable relationship of distrust.

There are multiple reasons why relationships work better at some school sites than at others. Among them are the history of the relationship, the principal's expectations for the program and the extent to which the Beacon and the school-day staff perceive the other to be responsive to their needs.

Over the years, sites have used a number of strategies for establishing good Beacon-school relationships. They include:

- Communicating the mission and plans for the Beacon Center to the school staff, especially the principal;
- Having regular meetings between school-day and Beacon staff;

- Hiring a Beacon-school liaison to address operational challenges that arise; and
- Providing needed services to the school.

Each strategy presents advantages and disadvantages to Beacon directors and other staff who are working to establish strong relationships within their host school.

Enlisting the support of the principal can significantly ease relationships with other school personnel.

Enlisting the support of the school principal is usually crucial to maintaining good relations with the host school. Strong support can ease tensions and head off disputes over the use of school space and increase the extent to which other school staff support the program. One principal, for example, designed reporting forms to ensure that classroom spaces were left in good shape after activities. By doing so, she assured teachers that the space would be respected, and she let Beacon staff know what the expectations for space use were.

Beacon directors are finding that turnover among principals means that they must think with some regularity about how to orient new principals to their efforts. Such turnover is very high: In the five schools involved in the evaluation, four have had two or more principals since the Beacon Center first opened in their school. This is a typical problem for such initiatives as the SFBI that are implemented in urban school districts: In a survey of 50 schools involved in the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds extended-service schools, approximately two-thirds had had two or more principals in the past five years (Walker et al., 2000). For organizations trying to work with school sites, the frequent turnover of school leadership poses a challenge to establishing effective working relations.

Support from the principal, however, may not guarantee that the rest of the school community is behind the effort. In some schools, leadership may rest informally with key teachers or other administrators. Such seemed to be the case in two schools that had relatively new principals but faculty with long tenure. In one of the schools, the principal's apparent support meant little for the initiative. In the other, school administrators seemed to take their cue from informal faculty leaders, who did not support the Beacon Center. In those two cases, Beacon staff may have been more successful had they established early working relationships with key teachers. Determining where influence rests, however, is difficult for outsiders unfamiliar with the school's history.

Beacon-school liaisons may ensure frequent communication between school-day and Beacon staff.

Currently, two of the five Beacon Centers in the evaluation have Beacon-school liaisons; two others have had them in the past. For some centers, liaisons play a critical role in smoothing relationships between the two organizations; they are responsible for meeting with school staff to discuss the use of space and concerns the staff might have about how the Beacon Center is using that space. In some sites, liaisons have made presentations to teachers about Beacon programs. One liaison facilitated meetings between Beacon and school-day staff. Others collect feedback from teachers and school administrators informally. Those principals who chose to use liaisons spoke highly of them and of their willingness to work through difficult issues concerning space and custodial services.

Having a liaison can provide crucial benefits. In one school with a particularly strained relationship, having a liaison in a previous year appeared to smooth difficult situations. One SFUSD administrator familiar with the liaison's work reported that the liaison's efforts to "bring harmony between the Beacon and the teachers [had] been awesome." The administrator expressed concern that the relationship would suffer after the liaison left. The following year showed how valid those concerns were; relationships at the school steadily deteriorated. Although having a liaison may not have prevented all the problems that developed, it may have helped.

Paying for the liaisons can be a challenge, despite the original commitment from the school district. Funding levels for California schools are relatively low—a result of Proposition 13, which constrains the government's authority to raise taxes. The school district, therefore, has relatively little to contribute to the Beacon initiative in the form of direct funding. Originally, the liaisons' salaries were paid for out of federal Title 11 funds received by the school district. As a result of spending decisions

made in previous years, however, the SFUSD found itself in a budget crisis by Spring 2000, and across-the-board spending cuts were implemented. To protect instructional services as much as possible, cuts were disproportionately made in other departments and services. As a result, future funding of all the liaisons was in jeopardy by May 2000 as the school district worked to figure out whether Title 11 funds would continue to be used. Ultimately, the SFUSD allocated Title 11 funds for three Beacon Center liaisons in the 2000-2001 academic year, an indication of the district's willingness to support the initiative even under severe financial constraints.

Regular meetings to discuss the needs of particular students provide a venue for school and Beacon staff to work together.

In one school, school-day and Beacon staff meet regularly to update one another on activities and to discuss particular students' needs. School-day staff refer youth—particularly those with behavioral or academic problems—to the Beacon Center for adult supervision and support. The staff also discuss what is going on in the center and the school.

Surprisingly, however, regular school-day-Beacon staff meetings are relatively rare at the schools. Finding time for meetings can be challenging. Many Beacon staff work in the afternoon and evening hours, after many school-day staff have left. During the school day, too, teachers have limited time to meet, since time away from classes is spent mainly on class preparation and meeting with school-day colleagues.

Providing services to the school builds good will.

Some school-day staff have reported that the Beacon Center either currently provides or potentially could provide useful services to the school. The kinds of services that Beacon staff can provide are extensive and varied and tend to be school specific. Some are integral to the academic mission of the school. At Valley Middle School, for example, a Beacon staff member substitutes on a regular basis for teaching staff at the school. Other Beacon Centers' programs contribute positively to the schools' social environment. At Ocean High School, the principal noted:

> *They've done things like donate computers, put up bulletin boards and create a space [for youth] next door...They bring families in and created a family council.*

At Meadow Middle School, the Beacon Center's DJ Club has provided music at school dances; the principal remarked, "as a result, I have not heard a single child come up and complain about the music." Finally, the Beacon Centers also contribute to the school by providing traditional social services: At Summit Middle School, for example, the Beacon Center has linked with a local health center to ensure that school students receive their health vaccinations, a significant benefit to both students and the school.

Managing Multiple After-School Programs

The five schools involved in the Beacon evaluation receive school district-administered programs that provide activities in the non-school hours. Having multiple sources of funding is important for the Beacon Centers, but it also brings further management challenges.

The primary sources of school-district funding for after-school programming are the federal government's 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants; the state of California's Healthy Start grants; and the state of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnership Program, first provided in the 1999-2000 school year. Four schools in the evaluation received funding from one or more of these three sources in 1999-2000 (see Table 8.1). California's after-school learning funds allow the Beacon Centers to extend their academic programming, while Healthy Start funds contribute to the development of school-linked integrated health, mental health, social, educational and other support services.

Table 8.1
Programs Funded Through the School District in 1999-2000

Beacon Center	21st Century Community Learning Centers	Healthy Start	After-School Learning Funding
Eastern*			
Valley	✔		
Ocean		✔	✔
Meadow			✔
Summit	✔	✔**	✔

*Eastern Beacon Center has a year-round child development program that is funded by the school district.
**Summit Beacon Center has limited Healthy Start funding that it uses to support its collaborations with service providers.

In some instances, Beacon Centers with state or federal funding funneled through the school district face challenges in their negotiations with the schools about how the money will be spent and how the programs will be governed. The government-funded programs are intended to be partnerships between school-day and Beacon staff. Challenges arise when Beacon and school-day staff do not agree on what it means to be partners.

Of the three funding sources, the 21st CCLC and Healthy Start funds are fairly flexible: They can be used to enhance academic, physical and mental health, recreational and community services. The state's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood funds are far more restrictive. They are intended to be used only for students who attend the host school. In addition, students must attend a specified number of days, and activities must focus on increasing academic achievement. Nonetheless, each funding source assumes that the needs of local communities are variable and unique and that it must be responsive to these local needs. Therefore, although the funds go through a central office—the SFUSD's School Health Programs Department—specific plans for spending the money are made at the school level. The funds require that the schools and the Beacon Centers design, plan and implement the programs together.

In two centers, school-day and Beacon staff work together to plan and structure the programs paid for with school-district funds. At these sites, tensions between school-day and Beacon staff over after-school academic programs are minimal. Two factors account for their success. First, the sites with minimal tension are those in which Beacon staff members make a concerted effort to meet with school administrators and teachers *and* school-day personnel are open to regular meetings. One site has a weekly "Care Team" meeting in which the Beacon director, Healthy Start personnel, the school principal and teachers discuss their programs and concerns. Second, hiring school staff to work in the after-school programs may effectively ensure that the school feels a part of the Beacon Center. In one successful collaboration, the Beacon Center administers the 21st CCLC grant but hires teachers from the school to staff the academic component and stays in contact with staff members from the School Health Department.

In the other two schools, however, tensions between school-day staff and Beacon staff are significant. School-day staff have reported that they think the school should have more control over how the resources are spent, because the funding is funneled through the school district. In reality, the federal 21st CCLC and the state after-school learning funds, which are being used to expand the academic offerings in the Beacon Centers, are distributed to the centers' lead agencies, which causes tensions when the centers and the host schools do not agree on how to administer programs.

The sites where tensions exist are also those in which strains have existed in the past. The new after-school partnerships have become the ground on which preexisting Beacon-school tensions are being played out. Conversely, where strong relationships already existed, the new funding has provided additional opportunities for the Beacon and school staff to work together.

Conclusion

The SFBI has experienced mixed success in forging a successful partnership with the school district. On the one hand, each side has made significant contributions. The host schools have provided space and custodial services for activities, and the district has funneled significant funds for after-school and community services to the Beacon Centers. Administrative staff from departments ranging from facilities to student instruction in the SFUSD have become involved in the Beacon partnership. Their involvement has facilitated decision-making and helped ease some of the tensions that have developed.

The Beacon Centers, in turn, have taken responsibility for operating extensive programs in the non-school hours. In some schools, the Beacon Center infrastructure is seen by school personnel as a useful platform for operating district-funded after-school programs. The Beacon Centers have also brought health and community services and programs into the schools, thereby increasing student and family access to them.

Nonetheless, the partnership has been challenging for all involved, and despite the use of a number of important strategies—school liaisons, verbal agreements, frequent interaction and meetings—partners report ongoing strains. Trust between the Beacon Centers and schools is a constant issue, with only two schools reporting high levels of trust for the centers. Beacon staff continue to report that specific teachers are hesitant to share classrooms, and teachers report that they do not trust the after-school providers to return their classrooms to their original state.

Building trust and maintaining it are long-term undertakings that rely not only on the personal relationships of people at the sites but also on the support of key leaders from all institutions: the school district and other public and nonprofit institutions. When there is critical turnover—such as when the principal is replaced or the site gets a new Beacon director—institutional support can be crucial to rebuilding trust.

Beacon-school integration is another challenge. A few teachers from the schools lead Beacon activities in the centers, which contributes to integration, but most Beacon providers come from outside the school-day community. A few Beacon programs take place during the school day, but most take place in the non-school hours. Almost all Beacon activities are designed by the centers and their providers, and school staff have limited involvement.

The challenges facing the SFBI are typical of community-school collaborations across the country. What is relatively unusual in San Francisco is the effort that has been put into improving and stabilizing relationships with the schools at all levels of the initiative. SFUSD personnel at the school sites and in the administration have been involved, as have Beacon and intermediary staff and steering committee members. Also unusual—and very ambitious—is the extent to which the initiative hopes to integrate the centers within the schools. Such integration is a long-term undertaking. The evaluation will continue to follow the development of the initiative's Beacon-school partnerships.

Sustaining the Beacon Centers

We started off with a small group, and we went into a dialogue about what this would look like. We had very strong interest in seeing that this happened in a way that would have long-term sustainability.

—SFBI funder

For the past several years, many school-based community centers in the United States have been funded primarily through time-limited grants. The federal government's 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which is designed to provide expanded learning opportunities for children in a safe environment, grants funds to school districts for three years. In the philanthropic community, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds currently operate a five-year adaptation of four different models for extended-service schools. In California, the Healthy Start initiative, designed to use the schools as a localized place for providing traditional social services, also provides funds for three years. Most funders who provide short-term grants view them as start-up funds for what they hope will be long-term undertakings. They expect that the grantees will be able to identify and acquire funding that will allow the work to continue into the future.

From its inception, the SFBI operated under very different assumptions. Local funders—who are also key decision-makers in the initiative—made long-term commitments to sustaining it. Their commitments, however, were not simply financial; they recognized that raising sustainable funds, especially public funds, is a complex and multi-pronged process. In addition to making short-term funding commitments, strategies must also be developed to ensure long-term funding, the establishment of broad public support and the redirection of public resources. The theory of change articulated the need to begin these activities at a relatively early stage. Unlike many initiatives, for which the work of sustaining the activities and institutions begins in the final year of funding, the SFBI began efforts to sustain the initiative soon after implementation began.

This chapter examines the work that has been done to provide financial support to the initiative. First, it briefly describes how the initiative has been supported. Then it addresses the following two questions:

- What sources has the initiative identified for potential long-term funding?
- How have steering committee members, intermediary staff and center staff contributed to the efforts of sustaining the initiative?

How the Initiative Has Been Supported

The initiative has a complex funding structure that draws on both public and private funds. Each Beacon Center receives $350,000 in core support: The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families supplies $300,000, and the remaining $50,000 is from a collaborative of local funders. Each center has also leveraged substantial additional funds that come in the form of grants and in-kind services provided by other youth-serving agencies." Total budgets for fiscal year 2000 range from $527,500 to $1,119,398. Table 9.1 presents the centers' budget estimates for fiscal year 2000.

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Table 9.1
Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Estimates for Each Center

Funding	Eastern	Valley	Ocean	Meadow	Summit
DCYF	$300,000	$300,000	$300,000	$300,000	$300,000
Beacon collaborative funders and United Way	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Leveraged funds	32,000	251,976	102,000	501,398	378,000
In-kind donations	145,500	68,319*	187,000	268,000	120,000
Total	$527,500	$670,295	$639,000	$1,119,398	$848,000

*Figure does not include the value of one provider and is therefore an underestimation.

From the beginning of the initiative, funders and planners agreed that long-term sustainability was a key goal. Thus, funders, both private and public, made commitments for the long term, but they hoped that the size of their grants would diminish over time. The DCYF currently spends over 15 percent of its total available funding for children's services on the Beacon Centers, and its contributions account for 85 percent of the centers' core support. As part of public government, DCYF staff need to fund a range of providers across San Francisco. They are sensitive to the fact that some city agencies may resent the amount of resources going into the Beacon Centers. To address this potential problem, the eight Beacon Centers are located in seven of San Francisco's 11 voting districts, thereby ensuring they serve a broad range of constituents. (As we explain later, spreading the centers across the city also addresses the need to build public support.) Nonetheless, in the long run, DCYF would like to reduce its level of funding and replace it with other public funds that can be used for core operating expenses.

Private funders contribute substantial sums to the initiative in the form of core support for the centers; grants for capacity building; and support for the intermediary, evaluation and public- support campaign. Like the DCYF, they plan to continue their contributions, but they are also sensitive to their institutions' goals. Support from philanthropic institutions is often characterized by flexibility with respect to the institutions' ability to provide funds for creative ideas. In addition, philanthropic institutions tend to have periodic shifts in their funding interests that reflect changes to their boards of directors. Therefore, while interest in the funders' collaborative for the Beacon Centers remains high, steering committee members have assumed that funds from the private foundations are better suited to providing relatively short-term start-up funding instead of long-term core funds. By doing so, they hope they can capitalize on philanthropic institutions' giving strengths: providing funding that has fewer restrictions on it, funding programs that are new and experimental, responding quickly to requests for emergency funds and supporting technical-assistance efforts to build local capacity.

Underlying institutional circumstance, therefore, has shaped the initiative's efforts to identify public funds to sustain the Beacon Centers. Those efforts have involved stakeholders from all levels of the initiative: steering committee members; intermediary staff; and staff, youth and parents from the Beacon Centers themselves. Both the steering committee and the intermediary identify sources of funding as well as shape future sources to accommodate the Beacon Centers. The centers respond to requests for proposals and write proposals for grants; such short-term funding becomes a way of piloting new programs. The three levels have also participated in developing a campaign designed to build public support for the initiative. Below, we describe the initiative's efforts to secure future funds.

Support for Legislation for After-School Programs

The initiative has participated in two efforts to pass legislation for funding that can be used to sustain the Beacon Centers.[11] The first effort began in 1998, when staff from the DCYF worked with the state assembly to draft legislation that would support after-school programs. The second effort began in earnest in 1999 as the initiative and San Francisco residents interested in children and youth issues planned their efforts to reenact the city's set-aside for children and youth funding.

Legislation for After-School Programs

In 1998, the SFBI became involved in the development of state legislation that would become the After-School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Act. Staff from the intermediary and the DCYF worked with staff from the state assembly to craft the language of the legislation, which provides funds for after-school programs. In particular, the initiative worked to insert language that would permit the funds to go to community-based organizations as well as school districts, thereby opening the way for the Beacon Centers to become fiscal agents for the funds. Originally, the steering committee hoped that the legislation's funding would replace some of the core funds provided by the DCYF. As the parameters for spending the funds became clear, however, the committee recognized that the money would not be available for core funds.

When the bill was passed, the language permitting community-based organizations to administer the funds was included, but so were other requirements that limited the funds' use by the Beacon Centers. First, the program funding required that elementary- and middle-school students attend the program five days per week for three hours per day. The specification was placed in the legislation because of the state's experience with the academic component of its Healthy Start initiative, in which programs were run on a drop-in basis and did not have much of an impact on student achievement. One problem with this requirement, however, is that, as youth progress through middle school, they become more autonomous in making choices about how they spend their time. An evaluation of the New York City Beacons Initiative indicated that approximately 55 percent of young adolescent participants attended centers almost every day, while a sizable minority attended less frequently (Warren et al., 1999). Expecting middle-school youth to participate daily in a voluntary after-school program does not take into account their increasing independence. As one stakeholder suggested, the legislation was written primarily with elementary-school youth in mind.

An associated challenge also had to be met. At the time, the centers relied heavily on staffing by AmeriCorps members, who were only available four hours per day per week (they spent the fifth day in training). Several Beacon Centers, therefore, did not provide after-school programming five days a week when the legislation was first passed.

Second, the legislation restricted funds to students who attend the host schools. The initiative, however, aims to provide a diverse array of activities to both the school community and the surrounding neighborhoods.

A third requirement was that 15 percent of the grant could be used for administrative purposes. Of that 15 percent, 5 percent was dedicated to evaluation. Ultimately, the SFUSD decided to act as the fiscal agent for the grant and to keep the remaining 10 percent. Sites receive $3.75 per student per day for three hours of programming a day, which is insufficient to cover the costs. The program, therefore, does not pay for itself, much less provide centers with core support.

Despite the challenges of making it work, each of the three middle-school Beacon Centers worked with its host school to apply for the funds. The centers restructured their programs to provide them five days a week, and they figured out how to integrate the programs into their existing schedules. The results were mixed, however. The funding was insufficient to cover the total cost of services. Middle-school youth's attendance was uneven, although, as we saw in an earlier chapter, middle-school youth did attend the after-school learning programs more frequently than other youth.

In response to the limitations set forth by the legislation, staff from the DCYF are working with other steering committee members and some Beacon Center staff to propose changes to the legislation's language. The modified legislation would increase the per-pupil expenditure to $7 a day and decrease mandatory attendance from five to three days a week. It would also permit the programs to serve neighborhood youth as well as youth from the host

school. Furthermore, a working group comprising staff from the state of California Department of Education, the CNYD, the DCYF, the SFUSD and the Beacon Centers has been convened to discuss after-school learning programs that would provide challenging learning opportunities instead of, as one Beacon director said, "programs that resemble study halls."

The Children's Amendment

In 1991, legislation setting aside 2.5 cents per $100 of assessed real property value for children and youth services was enacted for a 10-year period. Proposition J, as it was called, was used to establish the DCYF, which is responsible for allocating funds to both public institutions and nonprofit agencies. In 1999, a coalition of Bay Area residents interested in children and youth issues began efforts to continue the set-aside, which is formally up for renewal in 2001. The group decided to put the legislation up for renewal in the Fall 2000 elections. The amendment passed, with 73 percent of the voters approving it.

The work to renew the so-called Children's Amendment is representative of the multi-pronged and collaborative approach of the initiative. A staff member from the intermediary participated in the citywide effort to redraft the legislation and plan campaign strategies. Because 2000 was a presidential election year and voter interest and turnout was expected to be higher than in other years, the group decided to push the legislation for 2000 instead of 2001. Modifications to the original legislation include a half-cent increase per $100 of assessed real property value in the set-aside, as well as lengthening the legislation from 10 to 15 years.

The Beacon Centers also engaged in the effort to renew the legislation and participated in redrafting and campaign strategy planning. Staff convened meetings of neighborhood residents and agencies to build district support for the amendment. One Beacon Center director sat on the planning group and not only organized meetings within his center's community but also worked with intermediary staff to build awareness about possible actions that other Beacon directors could take in advocating for the amendment. Finally, some of the directors met with their district's supervisors to build support for the amendment, which was considered crucial for building broad public support.

Identifying Categorical Public Funds for Serving Specific Youth

One goal of the SFBI (expressed in the theory of change as "systems resources redirected to support the Beacons") is to get a greater public commitment for the Beacon Centers. Stakeholders share a strong belief that substantial public funds are required to sustain the centers over the long term. Both initiative-level stakeholders as well as CNYD staff have indicated that it is important, therefore, to convince public officials that the Beacon Centers are a worthy service-delivery platform for public funds. Stakeholders have also noted that expanding the base of public support is important. The DCYF has maintained a strong commitment to the initiative from the beginning, but the steering committee would like to lessen the initiative's reliance on a single major public funder.

Partnership with the Juvenile Probation Department

San Francisco's Juvenile Probation Department has looked at ways to develop partnerships with community programs to redirect delinquent or high-risk youth into positive activities. The potential fit with the SFBI is obvious, and the department became a large funder of the initiative late in fiscal year 1999, when Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds became available and department personnel realized that they quickly needed to identify promising programs to which available funds could be distributed. The Beacon Centers proved to be a useful terminus for the funding, since they had established programs and determined need and were under the auspices of the DCYF. Thus, in fiscal year 1999, the Juvenile Probation Department paid $450,000 to the initiative, and in fiscal years 2000 and 2001, the department granted $100,000 to each of the three new sites and $40,000 to the five existing centers. The grants were designated as enhancement funds to develop case-management programs to address the requirements of youth with special needs and target youth at high risk for juvenile justice involvement.

The TANF "surplus," however, is temporary, and the department has been trying to figure out how to provide ongoing funding in ways that more closely serve the needs of both the Beacon Centers and Juvenile Probation. Recently, the department has directed its funding to dedicated staff who will work with high-risk youth within the Beacon Centers,

thereby ensuring that the youth receive the added attention and case management they require while participating in a range of development activities.

As staff from the Juvenile Probation Department became more interested in seeing the Beacon Centers become platforms for services for high-risk youth, they also became more interested in having a voice in the initiative. Given the relatively high level of funding the department provides to the effort, it was given a seat on the Beacon steering committee (bringing the committee's representation to four organizations). In addition, staff from the department also sit on the sustainability committee, which is discussed below.

Partnership with the Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has substantial CalWorks (the state's welfare-to-work program) funds available for child care. Concern has been rising, in California and in other parts of the country, about large pools of unused welfare-to-work funds. The fear is that if the funds are not used, they will then be deemed unnecessary and eventually will be cut by state legislatures. In San Francisco, the DHS would like to use some of the CalWorks funds to provide reliable child- care for eligible families. Such funds could potentially be used as a source of income for the Beacon Centers. To that end, the initiative has entered into a partnership with the DHS and is in the early stages of planning how CalWorks funds can be used in the centers to provide child care vouchers to financially eligible families. Bringing CalWorks funding into the Beacon Centers presents challenges, however. One issue is how the centers will adjust to the many requirements attached to the funding. The evaluation will follow the development of this partnership.

Partnership with the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council

A third city agency that works with the SFBI is actually another part of the Mayor's Office, the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council (MCJC). The office has provided funding to improve intense supervision of high-risk youth. Two or three years ago, the office solicited proposals from the Beacon Centers for programs that would enhance juvenile accountability. One Beacon Center proposed a program to case manage a small number of youth who would participate in the center. The case managers mentor youth, accompany them to court appearances and make home visits. Staff at the MCJC have been pleased with the delivery of services through this Beacon Center and now provide funds for case management at six centers.

Private Funds

The SFBI hopes that the private funders' collaborative will provide long-term, flexible funding to the initiative. From the beginning, private funders have been crucial. The Beacon Collaborative Funders (BCF) is a group of local private foundations that pool their grants to the Beacon initiative. Originally, four to five foundations located in the San Francisco area participated. As of Spring 2000, that group had grown to approximately 16 foundations. The funds have been used for everything from core support, to technical assistance, to retreats, to the evaluation. In addition, the local United Way provided approximately $11,000 to each of the original five Beacon Centers in fiscal year 2000 for core support.

Pooled private funding benefits the Beacon Centers in several ways. They can use the funds to help fill programming gaps in the five core competence areas. The centers also have access to capacity-building grants that can address sites' specific needs: One site, for example, might need a grant writer, while another site might need computer hardware or two-way radios. Other, less tangible benefits arise from the funding collaborative as well. In the past, for example, private funders have put some pressure on public officials to maintain their level of commitment to the initiative. Public funders, in turn, have also noted that the strong, ongoing commitment of the private funders has strengthened their willingness to work with the initiative and the private funders.

How the Effort of Sustaining the Initiative Is Carried Out

The work of sustaining the initiative is being carried out by participants at all levels: the steering committee, the intermediary and the Beacon Centers. We focused above on *what* was being done to sustain the initiative; here we look at *how* the work is being done.

The steering committee plays a strong role in the development of funding partnerships. In general, a division of labor within the steering committee has emerged in partnership development. City staff, in particular, the director and deputy director of the DCYF, have taken the lead in partnership development with city agencies. They convene meetings, explain the goals of the initiative and explore funding options. In addition, DCYF staff with strong backgrounds in writing legislation and working with the state assembly have spearheaded efforts to influence the language in California's After-School Learning Safe Neighborhoods Leadership Act, which helps support the initiative.

The steering committee has sustained the participation of the private funders through several means. First, one foundation, the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, has taken the lead among the private funders to organize the group and sustain interest. Second, the group has developed a concrete strategy for funding the initiative that uses private funds primarily to enhance the work of the Beacon Centers instead of for core support. Third, leaders have positioned the initiative as a learning laboratory for local funders interested in youth development programs. Quarterly site visits and regular business meetings are held by funder request and help program officers see first-hand the initiative's progress, challenges and opportunities over time. Steering committee members hope that funders will use the initiative to inform their other giving programs, which is one way to increase local commitments to youth development principles and institutions.

The Beacon Centers themselves have also participated in plans to sustain the initiative. One center has taken on the role of piloting new programs in partnership with city departments other than the DCYF. Staff at the center figure out how to make the partnership work, given funding requirements. Once programs have been successfully implemented, the intermediary and the steering committee then take on some of the work of extending the programs and partnership to other Beacon Centers. Other centers implement pilot programs that have other funding sources. For example, the state after-school funds have been tested in three centers, and all three have reported their challenges to the intermediary and the steering committee. Center staff are responsible for identifying organizational resources that will help them stabilize and institutionalize their centers.

Intermediary staff also play a key role in sustaining the initiative. They help manage relationships with the funders, which includes working with the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund to plan and staff Beacon collaborative funders' meetings. The intermediary also manages the pooled fund and distributes resources to the Beacon Centers. Recently, for example, the collaborative funders consulted the intermediary for recommendations for the best use of $200,000 in private funds that was available for the initiative. The intermediary was given the responsibility of working with the centers to identify their capacity-building needs and of providing the resources to expand the centers' organizational infrastructure. The initiative hoped to expand the centers' capacity as platforms for broad service delivery, allowing them to manage public funds more easily and make them more attractive to public funders. At present, the organizational capacity to do this varies across the centers.

The Sustainability Committee

The sustainability committee was formed in 1998 to address the challenge of sustaining the initiative in the long run. Before the committee was formed, intermediary staff, the steering committee, lead agency executives and Beacon Center staff were all working on future sustainability, but they did not have a common forum in which to meet. The sustainability committee was formed to meet that need, a decision that seems to have provided multiple benefits to the initiative.

The group discusses a variety of issues that relate both to funding and to the challenges that face the Beacon Centers. For example, when the state funding for after-school learning was passed, intermediary and steering committee members provided information about the funds' requirements. The Beacon Center directors, over the course of several meetings, discussed their concerns about the requirements with the group. One concern was that the funding required them to change their schedules and program infrastructure. Although the steering committee had originally wanted all the centers to use the funds, discussions within the sustainability committee convinced the steering committee that the funds' limitations were severe enough that some centers might not be able to use the money during the first year's funding cycle.

Issues relating to the centers' physical infrastructure are also discussed by the sustainability committee, especially if they concern multiple centers. Although not all of the committee's members think the discussions relate directly to the initiative's future, all agree that the discussions are useful. In one example, the Beacon directors realized, during one of their monthly meetings with the intermediary, that five of the eight centers had problems with lighting at night. Intermediary staff proposed that the issue affected so many centers that it would be useful to discuss it at the sustainability committee meeting. There, centers explained their problems to staff from the DCYF, the SFUSD and private funders. Staff from the DCYF and the SFUSD then began to work with their institutions to identify solutions.

The Public-Support Campaign

A crucial part of sustaining the initiative is building public support. Therefore, the initiative included plans for a public-support campaign, which has been funded primarily by the California Wellness Foundation. The campaign is multi-pronged; the intermediary has primary responsibility for the effort, although all three levels participate.

Intermediary staff ensure that the initiative is represented at important city events, hearings, and conferences and are trying to reenact the Children's Amendment. Intermediary staff have spearheaded the creation of public-support materials summarizing the initiative's work, which have been distributed to funders, agencies and politicians in the San Francisco community. Among the materials are brochures—written in English, Spanish and Chinese—that emphasize the youth development focus of the initiative. Intermediary staff also support the Beacon Centers' efforts to advertise their presence. Those efforts range from a citywide Beacon celebration in February 2000 to celebrations sponsored by individual Beacon Centers when the DCYF organized an event to introduce the SFUSD's new superintendent to the initiative. The intermediary provided staff support. Intermediary staff ensure that members of the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors are invited to events and kept informed of the initiative's progress. They have participated in efforts to inform state-level legislators of the Beacon Centers as well. Finally, in the past six months, intermediary staff have begun to participate in national events and meetings that focus on youth development in the after-school hours.

Beacon Centers are also involved in the public-support campaign. They are encouraged to invite the media to local events, which has already resulted in a number of articles in neighborhood and city newspapers. Youth who attend the centers have been commissioned to speak in public hearings about their participation. Tours of the centers and other community events that advertise the centers' neighborhood presence have been organized by the Beacon Centers with the support of the public campaign manager, and members of the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors are invited.

Finally, the steering committee has participated in the public-support campaign. Members attend and speak at community events sponsored by the individual centers or the initiative.

To date, the public-support campaign appears to have generated considerable local support. Intermediary and steering committee staff report strong support from local politicians for the Beacon Centers. During the 1999 mayoral campaign, both candidates expressed strong support for the initiative. The San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors has voiced its support for the centers. State politicians are also aware of and interested in the Beacon Center model. At the state level, legislation was proposed in 2000 to establish other community schools based on the Beacon model.

Two factors appear to have contributed to the campaign's success in making the centers visible. First, the work is done on multiple levels, helping stakeholders generate support from several key networks. The centers draw local community support, which can be used to generate district supervisor support and greater visibility. The steering committee then uses the local support to generate support from people who are influential at the city and state levels. Second, the intermediary's efforts have been crucial in the overall coordination and communication that has led to successful events. The intermediary has been able to do this work so effectively partly because it hired a dedicated staff person.

Systems Accommodations in Support of the Initiative

One early outcome defined by the initiative is that key institutions will make systems accommodations that support the Beacon Centers' operations. "Systems accommodations" refers to changes that institutions make in their bureaucratic requirements or physical infrastructures that ease implementation. Examples of systems accommodations related to the initiative include establishing a municipal bus stop in front of one school with particularly poor access, improving lighting, establishing a memorandum of understanding for use between centers and their host schools and providing custodial services, all of which were discussed in earlier chapters.

The theory of change identified systems accommodations as a necessary and early outcome in enabling the Beacon Centers to operate. However, system accommodations also affect the initiative's long-term sustainability. As we saw in Chapter VIII, having an MOU or some other formal agreement is fundamental to the ongoing relationship between each center and its host school. As Beacon and school staff leave and new staff are hired, an MOU provides important institutional memory.

Reforming systems, however, is a challenging process, and the initiative has met with both success and barriers in doing so. Its successes include the agreement to identify a coherent theory of change that set forth a common mission, goals and outcomes that would guide the initiative's actions over the long run. In addition, early in the initiative, funders and the intermediary agreed to develop common proposals and report forms for funding that ensure that sites follow the theory of change. At first glance, the development of common forms may seem a relatively minor detail. In initiatives that receive funding from numerous sources, however, keeping track of proposal and reporting requirements can prove onerous to site coordinators who have a broad range of responsibilities. The SFBI has numerous funding sources, among them the city, the school district and multiple private funders. The fiscal years for the funders vary, which means that proposals and reports to the funders are due at different times and are based on different time periods. For example, the school district's fiscal year runs from August 1 to July 31, while the city's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The terms of private funders' grants are based on the award date, which can be any time during the year. As implementation began, therefore, the steering committee agreed that the common proposal and report period would be based on the school district's calendar—August 1 to July 31—which was seen as a major accomplishment.

Three years later, however, the agreement needed to be modified slightly when the DCYF was informed by the city comptroller that reports to the city had to follow city guidelines, which specified a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. As a result, the steering committee changed the reporting period, and all the private funders accepted the city's calendar. Beacon directors who administer funds funneled through the school district, however, such as the 21st CCLC grants, must continue to submit separate reports that comply with the school district's calendar and format. Although the arrangement is less desirable than preparing the original, single report, the sites can still prepare a single report and proposal for all other funding sources.

Conclusion

Achieving long-term sustainability is a daunting task for the initiative. At this point, the SFBI has not yet ensured the long-term survival of the Beacon Centers, but the outlook for the initiative is promising. The SFBI has made several efforts to identify potential funds, broaden the funding base and increase public awareness. Public funding, originally provided almost exclusively by the DCYF, now comes from several city departments as well as through school district grants, enabling the centers to expand their offerings. Several city departments now see the Beacon Centers as viable platforms for service delivery. The initiative's reliance on private funders for core support, while still a key part of its funding strategy, has diminished. Public visibility is high, with the centers receiving fairly frequent notice in the newspapers. Political support for the Beacon Centers also appears strong; during the 1999 mayoral run-off election, the Beacon Centers were publicly praised by all major candidates. The San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors and state assembly members attend Beacon Center events.

The initiative's highly collaborative culture and strong division of labor have helped it sustain itself. Center and intermediary staff work with steering committee members and other stakeholders to accomplish key goals. Staff at the Beacon Centers organize community members to campaign for political support for the centers. Steering committee members facilitate discussions with influential executive staff from other organizations and city departments. Staff from the DCYF have also arranged meetings with other city departments to explore funding options. Staff from the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, which represent the private funders on the steering committee, have taken the lead in communicating with other foundations. Intermediary staff provide support for convening meetings, ensuring that important events are communicated among initiative stakeholders, and lead the public-support campaign.

In general, the intermediary's role in sustaining the initiative is the most complex of all the stakeholders' roles. As one intermediary staff member suggested, they act as the "glue" that holds the initiative together. Intermediary staff were conduits of information to and from the citywide collaborative to renew the Children's Amendment. They recruited Beacon Center staff to the citywide effort and made recommendations to inform center staff about actions the centers could take to support the effort. Intermediary staff also make recommendations to funders about the best use of available funds, but they do so in collaboration with the center staff. The intermediary has been involved in the initiative from its earliest days, and top leadership at the intermediary has been stable over the years. A great deal of the memory of the initiative thus rests with the intermediary. Having such memory is important in providing continuity and stability over time. Intermediary staff know what kinds of partnerships have worked in the past and what kinds of challenges were faced and can provide that information to new partners.

Establishing the sustainability committee, which includes members from all levels of the initiative, has also been fundamental to efforts to sustain the initiative. The committee provides a forum for sharing information, discussing options and exploring new opportunities. Its membership is open, and it focuses not only on funding options but also on identifying and finding solutions to the institutional barriers the Beacon Centers face. Therefore, the sustainability committee has discussed such issues as how to alter the Beacon Centers' infrastructure to enable them to use the state's after-school learning funding and how to address safety concerns like lighting after dark.

Conclusions and Reflections

Six years after planning began and four years after the first Beacon Center opened, the San Francisco Beacon Initiative has accomplished most of its short- and intermediate-term goals. In this final chapter, we discuss the major questions that we introduced in chapter I in the context of the evaluation's findings. As this report has emphasized, community initiatives are long-term undertakings, and the SFBI is no exception. Because it is still in development and because it is just one case study in the community-schools movement, it will not provide complete answers to our questions. Nonetheless, the initiative offers a rich source of information for cities developing similar youth development centers, including what they should consider, what they can expect and effective strategies they can use.

What organizational structures and staff practices are effective in producing high-quality youth development programs, and how do they do so?

As this report has described, the SFBI has a complex and highly collaborative organizational structure that operates at multiple levels. Although it is too early to conclude that the complex structure has been effective in producing high-quality youth development programs, current information suggests that the structure shows significant promise in enabling the initiative to meet its goals. Middle-school youth's responses to survey questions indicate that the overwhelming majority feel safe at the centers and that the centers offer a wide variety of interesting and challenging learning opportunities. Observations of activities at all the centers indicated that most were well organized and well managed; provided a range of opportunities; and were staffed by responsive, warm adults and older youth. In addition, in a significant minority of activities, youth had opportunities to decide what they would do and how they would do it.

Although it is too early to conclude that the initiative's complex structure has been effective in producing high-quality youth development programs, current information suggests that the structure shows promise in enabling the initiative to meet its goals.

Despite these positive findings, there is some evidence that the Beacon Centers have further work to do in creating environments that are safe, provide challenging learning opportunities and provide ongoing adult support. Although the centers in the middle schools received high marks from participating youth in one or more of those three dimensions, only between one-third and one-half of the youth in each of the centers hosted by middle schools reported that they thought the centers provided all three. In addition, although almost two-thirds of the middle-school youth at two of the centers report that there are supportive adults at the centers, fewer than 50 percent report the presence of at least one supportive adult at the third center.

Not only is it important that centers implement a wide range of high-quality activities; they also need to recruit youth who reflect the populations of the communities they serve. Centers have been able to recruit a broad range of community youth from both the host school and the local neighborhood. The modal age of the youth at each center reflects the age of the youth in the host school, but the centers also attract both older and younger youth. In a highly diverse city, the centers have also reached a fairly diverse range of ethnicities.

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The San Francisco Beacon Centers have successfully recruited youth with poor academic records to their programs.

One particularly promising finding is the fact that participation among youth who attend the host schools is not limited to those who perform relatively well academically. In the three middle schools in which we conducted surveys of all the students, youth who attend the Beacon Centers have poorer academic records than those who do not. Their grade-point averages and school-attendance rates are lower, and their suspension rates are higher. In some centers, we speculate, this may be related to school referrals to the Beacon Centers. But it is also possible that the centers offer poor students opportunities to get involved in pro-social activities that they might not feel comfortable (or able) to get involved in during the school day. The ability of the Beacon Centers to draw youth at higher risk of academic failure is important for two reasons. First, some people have postulated that youth at risk of academic failure will be reluctant to attend school-based youth development centers, but our findings show that this hypothesis may be wrong. Second, an as-yet-untested hypothesis is that attending school-based after-school programs will raise students' level of school engagement, which typically has an impact on student performance. This hypothesis will be among those tested as we examine individual youth outcomes in the continuing evaluation.

The initiative's organizational structure operates at three levels: the site, the intermediary and the initiative. Although all three levels have collaborated to implement the Beacon Centers' activities, in this section, we discuss only the centers' staff practices and structures that contribute to activity implementation. (The work of the steering committee and the intermediary are discussed in other sections.) Each Beacon Center has an organizational structure that consists of a lead agency that works with the host school and other community agencies to implement a broad range of activities. Staff hired by the lead agency coordinate activities provided by Beacon Center staff, staff from other agencies and such individuals as teachers or community residents. Working with multiple agencies and individuals has enhanced the initiative's capacity to provide a range of youth development activities to many youth.

The concomitant requirement for effective communication arises as the number of providers involved in the centers grows. The number of provider agencies at each center ranges from seven to fourteen. In addition, each center hires several individual community members and teachers to provide activities. Each provider agency or individual must be made aware of center policies, host-school policies and schedules. Centers have varied, but apparently equally effective, strategies for communication. Weekly, biweekly and monthly meetings with providers are effective, as are orientation meetings with providers and informal communication. The one Beacon Center that relies heavily on informal meetings alone has a large office space that is available for providers' use. It is not clear whether a center lacking such space could rely as successfully on an informal strategy.

To ensure that the staff who provide activities to youth and their families are well trained, the initiative has implemented several strategies. First, coordinating staff from the Beacon Centers provide on-the-job training to staff they supervise. This is important since many of the youth workers in the initiative, as in many other youth-serving organizations, have limited formal education. Second, the intermediary provides training in youth development principles and practices to Beacon staff and other area youth-serving organizations, several of which provide activities at the Beacon Centers. Third, provider agencies frequently have their own staff- development programs, in which they train the staff who provide activities at the Beacon Centers.

Partnerships with the host schools are crucial to the development and maintenance of the Beacon Centers. Staff used several effective strategies for building relationships with school personnel, although maintaining relationships with the schools will probably be a continuing challenge. Some centers enlisted support from the principal or assistant principal to encourage teacher buy-in; some used paid staff as liaisons who met regularly with both Beacon and school-day staff; some provided services and resources to the school staff; and some had regular meetings to discuss the needs of particular students.

Although these strategies encouraged relationship building, at times, the Beacon staff's relationships with school personnel have been strained, for various reasons. For example, enlisting principal

support, while helpful, has not been a permanent solution because turnover among principals in urban school districts is high. Beacon Center staff have had to start over with every new principal—of which there have been quite a few. Likewise, scheduling regular meetings between Beacon staff and school personnel is a useful strategy, but it requires the active participation of both school-day and Beacon Center staff. For example, scheduling meetings between staff whose non-class time is during the school day and staff whose non-class time is after school presents logistical problems. To overcome these issues, parties need to be flexible and willing to accommodate one another. In general, the SFBI has gone through cycles in its relationship with school personnel, and those ups and downs are likely to continue, given the numerous pressures on the schools and the growth of the Beacon Centers.

Centers have devised effective strategies to address training, communication, coordination and activity implementation, all of which contribute to the quality of the centers' programs. Nonetheless, local circumstances in the schools and communities provide ongoing challenges to the centers' goals.

Many of the strategies that seem effective in creating promising youth development opportunities are shared across sites. However, each center exists in a particular environment, and environmental constraints play a key role in how programs are implemented. The physical infrastructure of the school and the demands that the school-day staff place on it proved critical in determining how programming was structured across the centers. In schools in which space is tight—either because the school is small or because the student population exceeds the schools' capacity—the Beacon Centers have limited access to dedicated space in which they can create safe havens for youth to hang out and interact with adults informally. Beacon Center programming in those schools tends to be limited to structured classes. In the long run, spatial constraints in the schools may affect the youth's developmental experiences.

Neighborhood resources also play a role in determining program structure and content. In neighborhoods where resources for youth are relatively abundant, the Beacon Centers have been able to contract services out to providers from youth-serving agencies. In neighborhoods where resources for youth are lacking, however, the Beacon Centers have contracted activities out to individuals in the community. The practice has both advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages include the fact that neighborhood contributors increase center staff's management, communication and training responsibilities. On the other hand, hiring community residents allows the centers to expand programming beyond their own staff's capacity. It also creates another tie by which community members are bound to the Beacon Centers, potentially increasing the centers' visibility and community members' support.

What types of collaborations and systems changes on the part of institutional partners are effective in supporting the work of the organizations that implement community schools?

In recent years, "collaboration" and "systems change" have become prominent concepts in initiative design, but it is widely recognized that both concepts are extremely difficult to implement. Collaboration requires ongoing effort and communication, and means working across institutions that have different cultures and practices. Conceptually, systems changes within institutions are supposed to make collaborating easier, but defining what constitutes a systems change and then achieving it in large, complex institutions presents further challenges. The SFBI has forged effective collaborations that have advanced the initiative's goals; its success in creating systems changes has been mixed.

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As this report has emphasized, the SFBI has been a highly collaborative undertaking from the beginning. Each center is managed by staff from a lead agency with ties to the local neighborhood, and activities at the centers are offered by a range of providers. A small committee of public and private funders meets monthly to oversee the initiative. The steering committee sets the size of the core budget at each center, decides on initiative-level funding strategies and oversees the development of partnerships with key institutions. A local intermediary

manages the initiative's day-to-day operations, provides technical assistance to the Beacon Centers and oversees the public support campaign and evaluation. The sustainability committee, which consists of members of the steering committee and staff from their institutions, intermediary staff, Beacon directors and lead agency staff, meets monthly to discuss new funding opportunities and other issues pertinent to the long-term success of the initiative.

Together, the collaborations in the initiative have accomplished many of their goals. The centers provide a diverse array of activities that aim to meet long-term goals, and community participation is high. Funding for the initiative continues to grow and to be supported by a greater diversity of funders, and public and private funders expect to continue their support in the future. Public support for the initiative is very high. The Beacon Centers seem to be well on their way to becoming neighborhood institutions.

Several factors appear to account for the collaborations' successes. First, strong leadership exists both at the centers and at the initiative level. Having strong leadership within the local lead agencies and at the Beacon Centers considerably eases the implementation of strong programs at the centers. Not only can the local leadership provide strong oversight and coordination at the centers; it can also draw on local networks of providers to bring activities into the centers. Strong leadership at the initiative level has enabled the SFBI to raise funds to provide adequate resources to the Beacon Centers. With those resources, the centers themselves have been able to leverage many other resources. Initiative-level leaders have also used their citywide networks to introduce potential partners to the initiative.

Second, the initiative and site levels are linked through two structures. The intermediary (discussed in greater detail in the following section) has served as a conduit for information between the Beacon Centers and the steering committee. In addition, the sustainability committee, formed in 1998 to discuss and implement strategies for the initiative's future, has provided a much-needed open forum for Beacon Centers and the steering committee to discuss important issues.

Third, the intermediary staffs both the steering and the sustainability committees, thereby providing the support that the groups need to move forward. Intermediary staff work with members of both committees to set and distribute agendas. They ensure follow-through on issues that emerge in meetings. One advantage in having the intermediary provide this support is that its knowledge of the overall initiative and its stakeholders ensures that communications go to the appropriate parties.

From its inception, the SFBI hoped that formal systems accommodations would be made to support the Beacon Centers. Early in the initiative, stakeholders made several important accommodations to the initiative. Stakeholders from the participating community-based organizations that lead center operations and public and private partners agreed to identify a theory of change that would guide action and evaluation over the long run. Furthermore, a large number of local private foundations agreed to contribute funds to a pool that could be allocated to the initiative on the basis of decisions made by the steering committee after consulting with the centers and the intermediary to determine how best to spend the money. Along with this accommodation, the initiative developed common proposal and reporting forms that ensured that the centers used the theory of change to guide their planning and action.

In addition to its successes, the initiative also faced challenges in achieving systems accommodations. One of the most significant challenges has been the establishment of a written agreement with the school district specifying what each Beacon Center could expect with regard to space and custodial services at the host school. Despite repeated attempts, the initiative has not yet been able to formalize what are currently verbal agreements. The challenges to doing so have been manifold: Turnover on the steering committee among school-district personnel was very high in the initiative's first three years, and no one person from the district was able to carry the task forward. Further, formalizing agreements requires the input of school-district personnel from multiple divisions and departments, including the school board itself. The intermediary and steering committee, which have jointly undertaken responsibility for ensuring that agreements get formalized, find that they must negotiate with several people simultaneously. Turnover among staff in the school district means that they sometimes must renegotiate old agreements with new people. Despite the challenges, however, this effort continues to be a priority, and

more recent stability on the part of the school-district's representative to the steering committee seems helpful. The focus on this effort has meant that, even though a written agreement is not yet in place, school district, steering committee, Beacon Center, school and intermediary staff are increasingly agreeing about what the verbal terms have been, which has eased relationships at the schools.

The effort to change systems to accommodate the Beacon Centers is a long-term process.

The school district is not the only major institution struggling to accommodate the Beacon Centers. From the beginning, the initiative's planners knew that a variety of institutions would need to make some changes to ease implementation. Among the hoped-for changes have been improved lighting outside some of the schools at night and a new municipal bus stop and turnaround at a school with poor physical access. Despite work at all levels of the initiative—steering committee members applying pressure, the intermediary convening and supporting meetings, and the sites defining needs and exerting pressure from community members—success has been mixed. In one of the three sites that was not part of this evaluation, outside lighting was improved substantially when the center worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to improve the lighting in a property adjacent to the school. On the other hand, the effort to build the city bus stop is bogged down in negotiations between the school district and the municipal transportation authority. Sites with lighting needs have come up with temporary fixes, but few have found permanent solutions.

There appear to be several barriers to achieving institutional changes. Some are immediate. Turnover among key staff presents a barrier because the new staff must be introduced to the effort and to the need for specific changes, which slows the process. Financial constraints, too, play a major role, especially at the SFUSD. Less obvious, however, and perhaps more fundamental are the barriers created by the complex organizations of the institutions. Those involved in the SFBI, even at the highest levels, have authority over a relatively small piece of their respective institutions. They have limited ability to sway the practices of their institutions as a whole. In addition, they are accountable both to their immediate institutional domain and to their broader institution. Their accountability includes their directive to carry out the substantive mission and current priorities of their department and institution as well as their responsibility to follow bureaucratic rules.

The SFBI's steering committee, which understands the constraints under which people from large institutions operate, has attempted to address the issue by staffing the committee with high-level executives who have some authority to make decisions and set priorities within their respective institutions. Where they do not have such authority, those executives at least have influence with, and access to, other decision-makers in their institutions. Over time, they have also become increasingly engaged in achieving the initiative's outcomes. Thus, while challenges persist in persuading institutions to make long-term changes that support the Beacon Centers, the initiative has structures and processes in place that continue to push for those changes.

How can technical-assistance providers and their partners build the capacity of organizations to take a developmental approach to youth and families?

In examining how the SFBI was implemented, this report has repeatedly mentioned the work of the intermediary in convening meetings and in providing day-to-day oversight of the initiative, youth development training to Beacon Centers and other San Francisco-area providers, and other forms of technical assistance. The intermediary has been involved at all levels of the initiative and has played a substantial role in building the capacity of the Beacon Centers to take a developmental approach to youth and families.

Intermediary staff ensured that institutions involved in the initiative communicated regularly.

Throughout these first few years, the intermediary's role has been both central and complex, becoming more crucial when the initiative undergoes a transition—a frequent occurrence in a developing community initiative. As the start-up period for the sites drew to a close, the initiative moved into an intermediate stage of improving program quality, increasing the size and scope of programs, and sus-

taining and stabilizing operations. Centers began to identify new needs, such as technological improvements or greater support from the schools. The steering committee began to focus on the developmental quality of youth activities. The intermediary communicated the steering committee's raised expectations to the sites. However, it also identified site-level technical-assistance needs and organized them into those that were shared across the centers and those that were center specific. Identifying shared needs was important since it allowed technical assistance to be delivered in group meetings, which expanded cross-center exchange. But it was also necessary to identify the centers' unique needs and determine how best to deliver assistance.

Intermediary staff ensured that institutions involved in the initiative communicated regularly. Although the intermediary did not lead decision-making for the initiative, it made sure that important issues were brought to the attention of the decision-makers. When specific sites experienced severe instability as a result of instability within their lead agencies, the intermediary usually heard about the problems first and then organized meetings to discuss the issues. If necessary, intermediary staff provided technical assistance or identified another organization to provide technical assistance. Two of the centers involved in the evaluation, and one that was not, required substantial organizational and management support. The assistance provided by the intermediary and supported by the steering committee proved crucial to stabilizing and strengthening the operations at the Beacon Centers.

The intermediary also brings potential funders and activity providers to the centers, thereby increasing the network of providers. It does so through several means. First, it introduces institutions to the Beacon directors during monthly management meetings. Several introductions have led to active partnerships with the centers. Second, it convenes Beacon directors on a monthly basis where they share information about effective providers. Several institutions now run activities at more than one Beacon Center as a result of such exchanges.

Because the intermediary has targeted both the Beacon Centers and other local organizations, it has been able to align many youth-program providers to work toward the initiative's goals.

The intermediary has also taken the lead in providing training in youth development theories and effective programming practices. It led a "Learning Network" that brought Beacon Center staff together to receive specific training in youth development theory and practice and to benefit from cross-Beacon learning. The intermediary also holds training sessions for San Francisco-area youth-serving organizations, and area agencies that provide youth activities at the Beacon Centers participate in the general training. Because the intermediary has targeted both the Beacon Centers and other local organizations, it has aligned many youth-program providers to work toward the initiative's goals.

The intermediary has also been heavily involved in supporting the initiative's infrastructure. When leadership at the initiative level was in flux during the early years, the intermediary stepped in to provide continuity. It also played a key role in orienting new steering committee members to the goals and tasks of the initiative. The intermediary's focus on the initiative's aim to create community centers that provide a range of youth development opportunities has sustained a coherent vision. "Vision drift" is an inherent risk to many initiatives, particularly those that have a diverse array of stakeholders from institutions that have somewhat different missions and constituencies. The SFBI has maintained a coherent vision that emphasizes youth development over time. This is not to say that stakeholders do not bring their own agendas to the table. They do. For example, in a political environment that emphasizes the importance of raising educational standards and performance, staff from the school district focus heavily on educational outcomes. The intermediary, however, has taken the lead in helping school-district staff develop a broader youth development vision. (This task is made easier because education is one of the initiative's core program areas.)

Not only must the initiative maintain a coherent vision and ensure that providers are well-versed in theories of youth development and that they can incorporate program practices that encourage development, it must also have the infrastructure and funding in place to sustain itself over time. The intermediary has played a key role in managing a public-support campaign to introduce politicians and the public to the Beacon Centers. Part of its work has been to take the lead in organizing events

or developing written materials. Another part has been to connect the Beacon Centers to the local effort to renew the Children's Amendment.

How has the theory of change process contributed to the initiative's implementation?

A unique aspect of the SFBI was the reliance on the theory of change to organize both the work of the initiative and the evaluation. In some ways, the theory of change approach to evaluation is not that different from good evaluation techniques that have always relied on setting forth hypotheses based on research findings and then testing them. The process as it was undertaken in the SFBI, however, required people at all levels of the initiative to agree on the pathways by which the initiative would achieve change. Unlike in many traditional evaluations, the defined pathways focused not only on how the initiative expected to achieve individual outcomes but also on how it expected to create centers that would become neighborhood institutions. The process of articulating the theory of change, which stakeholders undertook in the first year of implementation, laid out the initiative's expected outcomes and assigned responsibilities to particular organizations involved in the initiative.

The year-long process to establish a theory of change provided those who implemented the initiative with a shared understanding of what the initiative hoped to accomplish and how it aimed to do so.

Over time, the tasks and who would accomplish them, as well as an appropriate time frame, became clear. Unlike in other initiatives, the level of consensus among stakeholders about the SFBI's goals was high. In addition, stakeholders often knew who was responsible for carrying out tasks. Several key implementation duties, such as ensuring the centers' future funding, were begun early in the initiative, which provided the centers with some stability.

The process of articulating the theory of change, however, proved cumbersome. Participants noted that the significant time devoted to defining the outcomes could have been better spent elsewhere. Others noted that the language was overly abstract for some participants. There was, in general, a great deal of impatience with the process. In the end, however, the benefits of achieving some consensus probably outweighed the disadvantages of the process.

As it was articulated early in the initiative, the theory of change was incomplete and therefore is subject to refinements over time. In particular, the theory of change did not adequately envision or define how the three levels of the initiative would interact with one another. Responsibilities for specific tasks tended to be allocated to one level or another, when, in fact, the work is often shared. For example, Chapter VII discussed how centers and the steering committee both took responsibility for building relationships with future funders. Partnerships with provider agencies were developed not only by participants at the Beacon Centers themselves but also by intermediary staff and steering committee members.

In hindsight, it is easy to see how the initiative's theory of change oversimplified working relationships. Advocates of the theory of change approach to setting goals and establishing evaluation strategies have long understood that community initiatives develop lives of their own. Unexpected events occur and conditions change; goals and strategies need to be altered to account for these things. Advocates have also understood, therefore, that a good theory of change must be flexible enough to adapt to changes in the initiative. In the SFBI, a challenge to operations arose when stakeholders adhered to their expectations, set forth by the theory of change, that one level or another was accountable for specific tasks—even as it was becoming clear that sharing the responsibility was more effective than having one level do the work. Tension soon built up among the stakeholders. Some thought that tasks were not being carried out by those who had originally taken responsibility for them. Others questioned the usefulness of the theory of change. At that point, emphasizing that the theory of change should be flexible and adaptable relieved some of the tension.

Final Thoughts

At this point in the initiative, the SFBI has made considerable progress toward achieving its goal of creating sustainable youth development centers in schools. The initiative has high local visibility, which is a precursor to getting long-term public funding. In addition, key city institutions view the centers as platforms for fulfilling their youth-serving missions.

There are, however, a number of unanswered questions that will be the focus of further research. Little is known yet, in the SFBI or similar initiatives, about whether school-based youth development community centers produce measurable improvements in youth's lives. Do youth exhibit increased competencies in core areas? Does their engagement in school rise as they participate in center activities? Are there any effects on academic performance? To a great degree, the future of such centers relies on their contributions to youth's and their families' lives—contributions that are not yet fully known.

Endnotes

1 The sustainability committee consists of staff from key funding institutions, the intermediary and Beacon Center staff. It meets monthly to discuss funding opportunities and cross-Beacon implementation challenges and needs.

2 These are rough estimates because the centers had not entered information for all their youth participants. Rates may be higher.

3 Please see Appendix C for definitions and specific items that compose these measures.

4 Surveys were collected during the school day in November 1998. For further details on survey data collection, please see Appendix C.

5 From 7 percent (at Eastern) to 45 percent (at Valley) of the youth who participated at the centers some time between September 1 and December 31, 1999, did not participate during October and are not included in the frequency calculations reported in Table 5.4. These youth may have gone in September and not returned or alternatively may have begun activities after October.

6 The results for activity participation and core area participation may be an artifact of the number of months for which we have attendance data, if, in fact, the typical mode of participation is more season or session oriented, as is the case with YMCAs. Whereas Boys & Girls Clubs and Girls Incorporated centers have multiple activities going on each day in which youth can drop in, YMCA centers are more likely to provide activities that youth must sign up for and attend on a weekly basis during the course of the "session." From what we have seen of the Beacon Centers, they are oriented more toward "sessions," and we may thus see greater variety in youth participation as we access additional months (and seasons) of attendance data. The variety of activities in which youth at YMCAs participated was a stronger factor in whether they received developmental supports and opportunities than was how often or how long they had been coming. We expect the same will be the case for the Beacon Centers, and we will address this question in more depth in the final report on the SFBI.

7 In Appendix B, we list the program partnerships that each site operated in the period from July 1 to December 31, 1999.

8 We do not have the date for the formation of this partnership, nor do we know if the introduction was provided to all the Beacon Centers or just to Meadow.

9 From a draft document, "San Francisco Beacons Initiative: Roles and Responsibilities of Steering Committee Members, 1996-97."

10 Whether schools have provided dedicated space rests primarily on their capacity. The two centers that have either no or extremely limited dedicated space are in schools in which the student population strains the building's capacity to house them.

11 Budget estimates do not include the value of space provided by the schools for activities, which is a substantial in-kind contribution.

12 A third effort, which would provide state funds for new and existing Beacon Centers, was in its early stages at the time of this writing and will be detailed in future reports.

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Appendix A: Brief Descriptions of Five Beacon Centers

Eastern Beacon Center

The Eastern Beacon Center, located in an elementary school, has been operating since Fall 1997 in a community with a large Asian population primarily of Chinese descent, many of whom are recent immigrants and have limited English proficiency. The community has many poor residents and is extremely densely populated. Although a number of social-service providers are located in the community, most of them serve either young children or youth who need intervention services. Youth development opportunities for school-aged children such as those provided by the Beacon Center were lacking before the center's arrival in the community.

The center's genesis was slightly different from that of the other Beacon Centers. Whereas the other centers in San Francisco began when a specific agency took the lead in writing a grant for a center, a community collaboration of providers took the lead in planning and writing the grant. When their site was awarded a Beacon Center grant, it became clear to the parties involved that a lead agency needed to be established to manage the grant and oversee day-to-day operations. An agency that provides child care in the community took on that role.

Many students are bused to the school from other neighborhoods. As a result, even though the school is located in a community that is populated largely by Asians, the ethnic composition of the students is mixed: approximately 40 percent are Asian, and 40 percent are Latino. The school is small both with respect to the building's size and to its student population, about 360. A high proportion of students do not speak English, and most (87%) are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

The school chosen to host the Beacon Center was selected because the principal expressed great interest in having a center. A strong relationship with a supportive principal considerably eased early implementation. School staff were expected to make their classrooms available to the Beacon Center, which therefore did not have to struggle to find classroom space. Nonetheless, the fact that the center is in an elementary school presents limitations. There is no gym. Computer facilities are limited, and the furniture is very small for older youth and adults.

There are currently 11 staff members at the center who manage and implement activities. The programming at Eastern Beacon Center reflects not only the youth development focus of the Beacon model but also the concerns and needs of the local community. It is open until 8:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday. It offers a mix of recreational, academic enrichment, cultural and adult activities. Providing day care is also strongly emphasized—probably because the center is located in an elementary school and because the lead agency is a major provider of child care. Most of the activities are targeted toward elementary school students and adults, but there are also activities for older youth. Providing an opportunity to learn English is a crucial service for the immigrant population, and the emphasis on teaching English is seen throughout the center's programs. For example, an elementary- and middle-school summer camp have a literacy component. The high-school and parents' programs focus on English as a Second Language.

Meadow Beacon Center

The Meadow Beacon Center is located in a middle school in a neighborhood undergoing a demographic transformation toward poorer immigrant residents from a largely working-class population. The neighborhood is predominantly Asian, but also includes whites, African-Americans and Latinos. As with so many San Francisco neighborhoods, residents are being affected by rising housing costs. Many families cannot afford the high rents and are moving out of San Francisco altogether. Because the neighborhood has a long history of being a bedroom community, it is relatively "service poor"; the hope is that the Beacon Center will offer more services to the community.

The Meadow Beacon Center grew out of a nonprofit agency that began in 1993 to work with youth in the neighborhood. The agency did not have the capacity to meet the fiscal demands of government funding, so a statewide agency that provides both mental health services and foster care became the fiscal agent. Ultimately, the fiscal agent became the center's lead agency, bringing important financial and organizational resources to the center. Since its inception, the Meadow Beacon Center has been highly collaborative and has drawn resources from agencies outside the community.

The center is located in a large, overcrowded middle school. The school has approximately 1,250 students from sixth through eighth grades. It has a diverse population; its largest ethnic groups are Asian (48%), white (22%), African American (10%) and other non-white students (14%).

Since the school is so overcrowded, there is no dedicated space for activities, and staff use a room in the school that was once a storage closet for administrative tasks. Staff indicated there is no opportunity for there to be a drop-in center at the school. There has been increased tension between some school staff and Beacon staff related to sharing space. Some teachers who do not have dedicated space and have to move around the building for classes feel that the program infringes on their use of what little free space exists.

The center compensates for the lack of space at the school by running some programs off site, and it has recently found space near the school where it plans to house its administrative staff and run some programs. The center relies heavily on outside providers, who include neighborhood residents, other agencies and school staff. As of Spring 2000, the site had approximately 11 teachers participating in an after-school tutoring and homework-help program.

The school site is the recipient of state after-school learning funds, which the Beacon Center manages. Along with academically oriented programs implemented with those funds, the center runs leadership development, arts and recreation, career development and mental and physical health programs. It is open Monday through Friday; programs are run in eight-week sessions, with the exception of the summer programs, which are six weeks long.

Ocean Beacon Center

Eighteen months after the first Beacon Center began operations, the Ocean Beacon Center opened its doors in the only high school to host such a center. In addition to operating programs at the high school, the center also provides programs at a nearby middle school. The schools are located in a fairly affluent neighborhood, but despite the relatively high income level of residents, the area's population of poor residents is increasing. In addition, the neighborhood has few services available to youth, and there are Chinese and Russian residents who do not speak English.

This center is unusual in having started with two lead agencies. Originally, the smaller of the two agencies provided planning and staff supervision, while the larger agency provided fiscal support. However, in an effort to scale down overhead and as a result of increased organizational capacity, the smaller agency took over all lead agency functions in summer 2000. That agency focuses broadly on the needs of the local community and, unlike some other lead agencies, does not specialize in youth services. As a result, it has strong ties to community groups, which may account for the strong support and participation of community residents during the center's planning.

With a student population of about 2,350, the high school is the largest school in the initiative. The student population is over 50 percent Asian—primarily of Chinese descent—and 20 percent white. African-American, Latino and other non-white students make up the rest of the population.

When the Beacon Center began operations, it was given access to two portable classrooms. Interior space at the school was not provided. Since then, however, interior space has become available, and the center runs programs in some of the classrooms. Teachers are aware of programs and often participate. The relationships between Beacon staff and school staff are both supportive and beneficial.

The Beacon Center provides a range of recreational, health-related and academic opportunities. The health-related activities tend to be funded by Healthy Start, a state-funded initiative that provides enhanced services in schools, while the recreational and academic enrichment activities are either funded or coordinated by Beacon staff. In the middle school, academic programs are funded by state after-school learning funds. The high-school site places greater emphasis on leadership development and life-skills activities than does the middle-school site. And the high school has, in one of its portable classrooms, a drop-in teen center that is heavily used.

Summit Beacon Center

The Summit Beacon Center opened in Fall 1996. The center is located in a middle school in a community that is among the poorest in the city. The lead agency is a longtime community organization and was once a settlement house. It is a small organization that provides a range of social services for everyone from children to senior citizens.

The school has the smallest population of the three Beacon middle schools included in the evaluation, partly because until relatively recently, the school had a negative reputation in the community. In 1994, all its staff (teachers and administrators) were reassigned because student performance was so low. In the past year, the school population has begun to grow as the school's image improves.

Summit is as diverse as the other schools; its largest ethnic population among the students is Asian, which makes up about 45 percent of the total school population. African-American students make up another 25 percent. There are also sizeable Latino and Filipino populations in the school. Historically, the center has had a very positive relationship with the school. The principal who was brought in to improve the school is a strong supporter of the Beacon and has hired teachers who also support it.

Nine core staff members currently work at the center, which, in the past, has faced some staffing challenges. As of Summer 2000, it is the only center to have had turnover at the director level. The current director, who has been at the center for two years, is the third. Leadership changes have also led to changes among other staff. In Summer 1999, the site underwent a complete restructuring when the director determined that the available positions did not adequately cover the center's needs. The director also aimed to oversee staff who would bring in the maximum range of programs, provide high-quality services and garner increased levels of community involvement. The previous staff mirrored the community in terms of ethnicity (African-American, Asian, Latino, Samoan and white). The restructuring effort kept this in mind. Given the ethnic background of the students and their families, the revised Beacon staff also needed to be able to speak Cantonese and write and speak Spanish.

Programs at the Summit Beacon Center cover four of the initiative's core areas: health (in the form of mental health services), academic enrichment, leadership, and arts and recreation. The school is relatively underpopulated given its physical size, which means that the Beacon Center has sufficient space for activities. It has both dedicated space as well as access to many facilities. Because space is available, the center is able to run an open recreation program.

The school is the recipient of federal funds for a 21st Century Community Learning Center and state funds from the Healthy Start initiative and the After-School Learning Act. The funds contribute to the provision of mental health and academic enrichment activities. The Beacon Center and the school work together closely to ensure that the additional funds address the needs of the school population.

Valley Beacon Center

In 1996, the Valley Beacon Center was implemented in a neighborhood that is predominantly Latino but that also includes whites, African-Americans and a growing number of Southeast Asians. The community has extensive social services and is undergoing gentrification. It is also becoming more commercial as start-up Internet companies move in. Housing costs are rising, and many families are being displaced.

When the Valley Beacon Center first opened in 1996, the host school's student population was 720; four years later, the population is at a steady 550. The school population is 45 percent Latino, 20 percent African-American and 20 percent Asian. About 60 percent of the youth are eligible for free lunch, and almost half have limited English proficiency.

The school has provided dedicated space to the Beacon Center. The center is located on the first floor of the middle school, in what was once a double classroom. The space is large and houses staff from different programs. The front of the center is set up with sofas and comfortable chairs in which youth can sit and chat. There is also a sign-in desk manned by a member of the safety and support team or a participating older youth. In addition to its dedicated office-meeting space, the Beacon has access to classrooms, the gym and other areas of the school.

There are currently 16 core staff members at the Valley Beacon Center. The center's director is a staff member of the lead agency. The lead agency has a long history of working in the school, where it provided a range of youth development programs prior to the center's inception. Unlike at some centers, lead agency staff were very involved in the center's early development. Beacon staff, which were numerous from the beginning, drove programming and administrative growth at the lead agency, which is the smallest organization managing a Beacon Center.

The Valley Beacon Center has extensive programming throughout the school year and the summer. Its programs tend to run in academic-year, summer or year-long cycles. There is a strong focus on cultural arts and academics. The center provides several activities that promote youth leadership development and a limited number of activities offering youth career development experiences. Among the agencies that provide services under the Beacon Center's umbrella, one provider has its administrative office at the Beacon Center and runs a number of programs there. The school site is the recipient of federal funds for a 21st Century Community Learning Center, and the Beacon Center manages the resulting academic programs.

Appendix B: Partnerships and Collaborations

Eastern Beacon Center

Name of Provider	Program
Back on Track	One-to-one tutoring
BAYAC	AmeriCorps members provided to site
Community Educational Services	English literacy and life skills
City College	Adult ESL
San Francisco's Promise	Health; career prep; community service
San Francisco Unified School District	Child development
Sierra Club	Outdoor activities
Jewish Coalition for Literacy	One-to-one reading
YMCA	Summer recreational camp
CNYD ASL Program	Pilot literature curriculum

Number of Teacher and Resident Providers

Teachers	Residents
1	0

Valley Beacon Center

Name of Provider	Program
Mission Learning Center	Help with elementary reading
Arriba Juntos	Reading classes
BAYAC	ASLA; youth council
SFSU/CCSF	ESL classes; college mentors for ASLA
YMCA	SHERO
San Francisco Conservation Corps	Youth In Action
PLTI	Parent training
Peer Resources	S.L.A.S.H
SJETC	Kid Power; Urban ArtWORKS
Loco Bloco Drum and Dance Ensemble	Drumming; dancing; theater
BRAVA! For Women in the Arts	Theater

Number of Teacher and Resident Providers

Teachers	Residents
0	0

Ocean Beacon Center

Name of Provider	Program
City College	ESL and citizenship classes
YMCA	Middle-school program
Back on Track	Consultation
Just Think Foundation	Instructors for Web design
Healthy Start/Horizons Foundation	GO
Chinatown Youth Center	Cantonese parent group
Horizons Unlimited	Career counseling
Our Schools, Our Media	*See For Yourself* newspaper
Peer Resources	JBUG
Women's Safety Project	Girls' self-defense
First United Lutheran Church	Guitar program funds
San Francisco Conservatory of Music	Guitar program support
San Francisco Asian Art Museum	Staff for Go (the game)
Asian-American Recreation Services	Project Together; substance-abuse counseling

Number of Teacher and Resident Providers

Teachers	Residents
3	3

Meadow Beacon Center

Name of Provider	Program
Civic Ventures	Experience Corps project support
Developmental Studies Center—Oakland	After-School literacy project
BAYAC	AmeriCorps and Vista personnel provided to sites
Saint Ignatius School	High-school volunteer tutors
Lowell High School	High-school volunteer tutors
Sunset Youth Services	Juvenile justice case management/support
Sunset Mental Health Services	Technical assistance and training; client referrals
Abraham Lincoln High School	Case management and campus-based support groups
Ocean Park Health Center	Health resources
San Francisco State University	Intern for developmental disabilities
The Training and Health Education Center for Youth	SOS
MYEEP	Youth employees
San Francisco's Promise	Youth development programming and support
Women's Safety Project	Girls' self-defense
Peer Resources	Youth leadership
Save the Children U.S. Programs	Technical assistance
Recreation and Parks Department	Arts and recreation supervision; cultural arts/crafts programming
YMCA	Drop-in recreational activities
Taraval Police Station	Middle-school volunteer programming; security assistance and patrol
Police Activity League	Girls' basketball team and program
Francis Scott Key Elementary School	Literacy; Experience Corps; family counseling
Sunset District Neighborhood Coalition	Volunteer recruitment
Golden Gate Regional Center	Inclusion program (reimbursement for support staff)

Number of Teacher and Resident Providers

Teachers	Residents
9	3

Summit Beacon Center

Name of Provider	Program
Silver Avenue Health Clinic	Health services
CCSF	Adult education
Girls After School Academy	GASA
Women's Safety Project	Girls' self-defense
Peer Resources	Health projects/conflict mediation
YMCA	Lunch-time recreation
Real Options for City Kids	ROCK
Sunnydale Boys' Club	Career training/G.E.D. preparation
Healthy Start	Counseling/case management
BAYAC AmeriCorps	Tutoring/mentoring
Village	Leadership
"Soul'd Out"	Adult recreation
Asian-American Basketball League	Adult recreation

Number of Teacher and Resident Providers

Teachers	Residents
1	0

Appendix C:
Survey Response Rates, Measures and Measure Development

In November 1998 and November 1999, students in the sixth and seventh grades at each of the three middle schools hosting Beacon Centers completed surveys during one class period. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete, with additional time for distributing and collecting the surveys.

Response Rates

At the school that hosts the Summit Beacon Center, 82 percent of the youth enrolled in the sixth and seventh grades completed the survey. At the school that hosts the Meadow Beacon Center, among sixth grade students, 85 percent participated in the survey; among seventh graders the participation rate was 87 percent. The participation rate for sixth graders at the school that hosts Valley Beacon Center was considerably lower than for other groups—76 percent; the seventh grade participation rate was 85 percent.

The second round of surveys was administered in November 1999, again to sixth- and seventh-grade students attending the three host middle schools. Response rates were 55 percent and 51 percent for sixth- and seventh-grade youth at the school that hosts the Summit Beacon Center; 79 percent and 82 percent at the school that hosts the Meadow Beacon Center; and 69 percent and 56 percent at the school that hosts the Valley Beacon Center.

Measures

The youth's responses on the surveys provide measures of several different constructs. Each of the constructs referred to in this report and the items that compose them are described below.

School Engagement (youth respond on a 4-point scale from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).)

- I don't try very hard in school. (Reverse coded)
- I pay attention in class.
- I often come to class unprepared. (Reverse coded)
- I work very hard on my schoolwork.

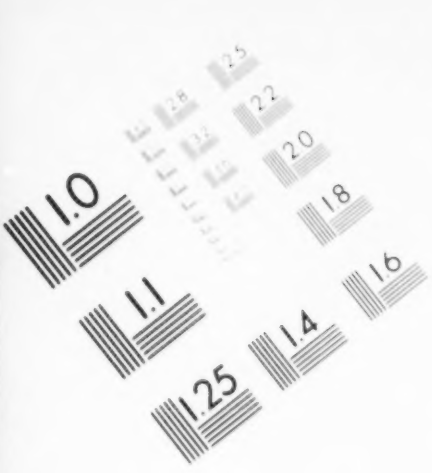
Self Efficacy (youth respond on a 4-point scale from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).)

- If I can't do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.
- I give up on things before finishing them. (Reverse coded)
- If something looks too hard, I will not even bother to try it. (Reverse coded)
- I handle unexpected problems very well.
- Failure just makes me try harder.
- I am unsure about my ability to do things. (Reverse coded)
- I can depend on myself.
- I give up easily. (Reverse coded)

Positive reaction to challenge (youth respond on a 4-point scale from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).)

When I have a problem or argument with *another student, a teacher or other adult:*

- I think about it afterward and try to figure out what went wrong.
- I talk to the other student about it later and make sure to straighten it out.
- I make sure it gets fixed.



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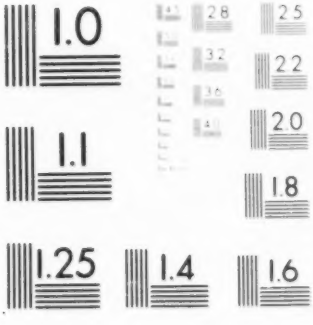

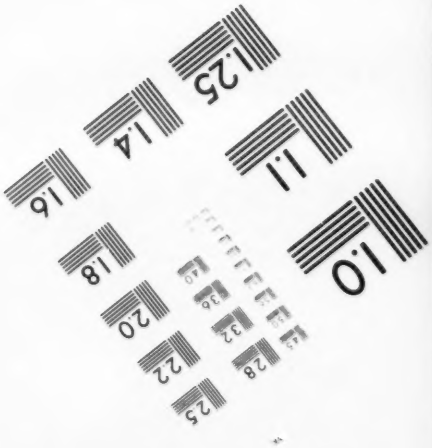

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Negative reaction to challenge (youth respond on a 4-point scale from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).)

When I have a problem or argument with *another student, a teacher or other adult:*

I act like it doesn't matter.

I don't talk to them.

I figure it was the other student's problem.

Meaningful roles and responsibilities (youth are asked to write in the exact number of times.)

In the last year (12 months), how often have you:

Represented a group, team or club at an event or meeting?

Helped plan activities or events for a group, team or club?

Been in charge of supplies or equipment for a group, team or club?

Been a peer counselor or tutor?

Given a presentation to a group of people?

Helped raise money for a group, team or club?

Trained or supervised other youth?

Helped set rules or procedures for a group, team or club?

Prepared a snack or set up an activity for a group?

Had administrative duties like taking attendance or notes during a meeting?

Been a class officer or student council member or group or club leader?

Supportive relationships with adults and peers (youth are asked four different sets of questions about family, school, young people and adults at the Beacon Center and are asked to write in the actual number.)

Adult support at home: How many ADULTS IN YOUR FAMILY do the following things:

Adult support at school: How many ADULTS AT SCHOOL do the following things:

Peer support: How many YOUNG PEOPLE do the following things:

Adult support at the Beacon center: How many ADULTS AT THE BEACON CENTER do the following things:

Let you know when you do something wrong or bad?

Say something nice when you do something good?

Pay attention to what's going on in your life?

Could you go to if you were really upset or mad?

Could you go to for help in an emergency?

Could you ask for advice about personal problems, like a problem with a friend?

Measure Development

Each of the constructs used in this study has been used in other studies of youth organizations and community initiatives. Youth's reaction to challenge and school engagement are measures that were used in P/PV's study of the Urban Corps Expansion (Connell et al., 1995). The constructs measuring self-efficacy as well as adult and peer support have been used in P/PV's previous evaluations of a community change initiative (Sipe and Ma, 1998), nationally affiliated youth-serving organizations (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997) and the Urban Corps Expansion Project (Connell et al., 1995).

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